

The Black Cat



March 1896.

Eleanor Stevens' Will,
To Let,
Of Course — Of Course Not,
The Marchburn Mystery,
Their Colonial Villa.

Isabel Scott Stone
Alice Turner Curtis
Harry M. Peck.
A. Maurice Low.
Charles Barnard



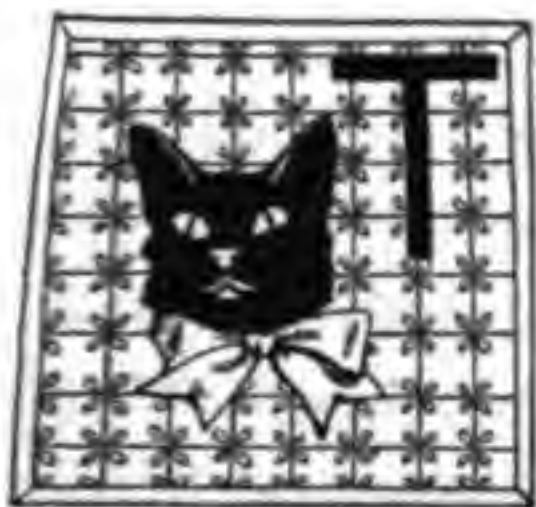
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The Interrupted Banquet.

BY RENÉ BACHE.



THOUGH quite familiar with the street, I could not remember having seen that particular house before. My recollection had been that there was a vacant lot just there. But I must have been mistaken, for the dwelling before me was substantial enough, though old-fashioned, with high front steps and large windows. A trifle out of repair it looked, by the way, and I even noticed that two or three panes of glass were gone. On the whole, the mansion presented a somewhat mournful appearance, as if fallen from an old-time respectability into a condition of decay and decrepitude.

I am sure that it would never have occurred to me to enter, had it not been that the young lady who accompanied me turned and deliberately mounted the steps towards the front door. Of course I followed. She did not ring the bell; for, in truth, there seemed to be no bell to pull. But the portal was noiselessly thrown wide from within, and we entered. I looked in vain for the servant who, I supposed, would receive our cards; but, to my surprise, Mabel walked straight ahead through the wide hall, without hesitation, appearing quite familiar with the place. There should have been a light, I thought, though it was only two o'clock in the afternoon; for the interior of this strange mansion was very dark, and I could only make out in an indistinct sort of way the faces that looked down upon me from some old portraits, obviously fine works of art, as I passed.

Mabel had introduced me to most of her friends, for we had been engaged for six months and were to be married very soon; but she had never spoken to me of these people, who, perhaps, were rather out of the fashion and had been forgotten. As these reflections passed through my mind, we ascended a broad staircase to the second floor, and then it was that I heard a sound of revelry

which came from a room which I correctly judged to be the dining-room of the house. The heavy oaken doors of the room were slightly ajar, and through them was cast a strong beam of light that fell full upon an object which startled me for an instant. It was a headless human figure. A second later I smiled at my own alarm, inasmuch as the figure was nothing but a suit of old armor without the helmet.

If I had had a chance, I should have questioned Mabel, in order to make sure that our unannounced entrance was not an intrusion; also, I might have asked why, after starting out for a day's yachting trip, we had returned so early and for so strange an entertainment. But either query would have been out of place just then. Very likely, I thought, she had some surprise in store for me, — a lunch party, maybe, arranged by some friends in our honor; for quite a series of dinners and other entertainments had been given to us in celebration of our engagement. Moreover, all that I have related took place within less than a minute and a half, and in another moment I found myself in the large and brilliantly lighted dining-room. If the rest of the mansion was dark, there was no lack of illumination here. I was fairly dazzled by the numerous lights, clusters of which, arranged in silver candelabra, helped to adorn a long table, at which twenty-five or thirty people were seated. There were flowers in profusion, with a great display of silver and cut glass.

To my astonishment, not one of the people present seemed to take the slightest notice of our entrance. Near one end of the table were two vacant chairs together. Mabel quietly took one of them, and I, deeming the time hardly proper for an explanation, seated myself in the other. Soup was immediately placed before us — evidently we were not very late — and I took two or three spoonful of it. It struck me as being singularly tasteless.

The courses followed each other in the usual mechanical fashion. What there was to eat I do not remember with any distinctness, for I was so absorbed in wonder and in studying the other guests that I took little notice of the viands. Opposite me was a funny-looking old lady in white silk, cut low at the neck to such a degree, I thought, as would have been more appropriate to a younger and plumper person. I particularly recall the fact that

she wore camellias in her hair — a fashion which I had heard of as belonging to a generation ago. It was palpable, too, that her front hair was false. Withal she was most agreeable and amiably disposed, as I presently discovered from her conversation. She was the first person who addressed any remark to me, abruptly making some inquiry about my grandfather, and stating in the same breath that she was from Philadelphia.

At her left sat a gentleman of rather more than middle age, as I judged, with a remarkably pink nose and a great expanse of shirt-front, who was devoting himself so assiduously to his plate that not a word escaped his lips. On the other side of the old lady with the camellias was an extremely thin man, with a peaked countenance, who so strongly reminded me of an undertaker that I felt almost tempted to ask him a question or two about the state of the market in respect to coffins and other funeral equipments. His necktie was black and likewise his hair, while his expression was one of extreme solemnity. Mabel was seated at my right, while on my other hand was a buxom matron of forty or so, who manipulated knife and fork with an activity that suggested a most excellent digestion.

Among the guests these were the first whom I noticed particularly. As I looked along the table, I was rather surprised to find that not a face was known to me. There was a cadaverous-looking young man with a prematurely bald head whom I pointed out to Mabel, asking who he was ; for I had noticed that a sign of recognition passed between them.

“My brother,” she replied quietly and, as I imagined, sadly.

Now this was a surprise, for I did not know that Mabel had a brother. Perhaps, I thought, he was not an especially estimable youth, and so was ignored by her family. If that were so, why should he be present on this occasion ? Here was another puzzle, to be solved when a suitable opportunity offered for questioning my fiancé.

On the left of Mabel’s brother was a remarkably pretty, though very pale young lady, who wore in her hair, oddly enough, what looked to me like a bridal wreath. But the handsomest woman present was she whom I supposed to be our hostess. She was of regal presence, and, with her velvety eyes and coronet of black

braids, resembled a Spanish señorita. Though I had never seen her before, I took it for granted that she must know who I was, and repeatedly I tried to catch a glance from her; but it was in vain, for her conversation and attention were addressed almost exclusively to an elderly man on her right, apparently a foreign diplomat, as half a dozen orders glittered upon his breast. At the other end of the festive board sat a gentleman with a huge gray moustache, presumably our host. I heard no remarks from him, save now and then a request to "pass the decanter," addressed to one or another of the guests near him. I had no opportunity for speech with him, inasmuch as Mabel and I were divided from him by almost the length of the table.

On the whole, the affair struck me as entirely extraordinary. Here we were, myself completely a stranger, at a banquet in a house which I had never visited before! Indeed, had it not been for Mabel's assurance of welcome and the two seats apparently reserved for us, I should have supposed that we had made some mistake. Mabel herself was singularly silent, though ordinarily quite talkative and even jolly, and offered no explanation of the situation. But perhaps what astonished me more than anything else was my discovery, some time after we were seated at the table, of a young man, some distance away, who bore a striking resemblance to my chum at college. Upon my word, I was on the point of shouting at him across the board. In fact, the words, "Why, Bill, old man, how did you get here?" were on my lips, when I checked myself in time, owing to a remembrance of the fact that Bill had been dead for eight years, having met a most untimely fate in a railway disaster.

While engaged in wondering whether the young man could be a near relation of my former chum's, I was startled at seeing a telegram in the familiar Western Union envelope laid beside my plate. Some people, notably stock brokers and newspaper men, are accustomed to telegrams, and for that reason are not alarmed by them. But habit had not rendered me thus callous, and with some haste I tore open the envelope and glanced over the contents. It read:—

"Mabel died this morning of acute congestion of the lungs.

"AMELIA PARKER."

I declare that I trembled as if I had a chill. If Mabel had not been by my side, I should have been overcome by the shock. Holding the telegram before Mabel's eyes, I exclaimed in a voice that trembled with conflicting emotions of horror and anger: "This is carrying a practical joke too far. Here, some brainless wretch telegraphs me in your mother's name that you are dead."

Careless of the almost frenzied energy with which I spoke, I looked around upon the faces of my fellow-guests as one does who is confident of sympathy. To my amazement, in response to my speech, there arose a cackle of laughter which was presently transformed into a general ripple of mirth. And such mirth! The like of it I had never heard before, and, please heaven, I hope I never may again. It was not like real laughter, but rather the empty and strident cachinnation of beings lost to the feelings of humanity.

Pale with anger, I rose to my feet and, steadying myself with one hand on the back of my chair, exclaimed:

"What does this mean?"

Dead silence was the only response. Conversation had ceased, but I felt that every eye was fixed upon me. Aghast, I looked at Mabel, but she did not return my gaze. At length, the old woman with the camellias in her hair, who sat opposite, addressed me, saying:

"Why do you think that Mabel is not dead?"

"Good God!" I replied. "Here she is. Don't you see her? What do these people mean?"

The old woman grinned and waved her feather fan at me, playfully, saying:

"Ask her if she isn't dead?"

I turned to Mabel in wonderment, but she only shook her head sadly.

"Why, of course she's dead!" said the old woman. "Don't you know that all of us here are dead?"

"Indeed, yes; we are all dead," cried the other guests in general chorus.

"This is getting beyond patience!" I exclaimed. "You, too, are pleased to joke with me, but I tell you frankly that I fail to

see the fun of it. Perhaps, since you possess such a fund of humor, you will be telling me next that I am dead, also."

Then came that laugh again. I never shall forget it. Beginning with a cackling titter, it spread until the whole table was in a roar, making my very flesh creep. Then all at once it ceased, and again there was dead silence.

"Certainly you are dead," said the old lady with the camellias. "She's dead, and all of us are dead. She died this morning of acute congestion of the lungs, but I have been dead for these twenty years, and he, too," indicating with her fan the elderly gentleman with the pink nose. "My own complaint was cerebro-spinal meningitis."

My legs gave way under me and I sank into my chair. As I did so my hand touched Mabel's, and I grasped hers tightly. It was cold as ice. Leaning toward me, she whispered in my ear:

"Don't make a scene! It is all quite true. You were run over an hour ago by a trolley car."

Not daring to believe my senses, I replied:

"And this house — ?"

"Sh — h!" said Mabel. "It is only the ghost of a house,— the phantasmal reproduction of an old mansion that used to stand on this spot, where there has been an empty lot for fifteen years past."

"I — I think I understand," I gasped. Then, though my brain swam, I made a tremendous effort to summon up my courage and face composedly this dreadful situation. Addressing myself to the old woman opposite, I said:

"Perchance you were acquainted with the former occupants of this dwelling?"

"Oh, yes," she answered pleasantly. "I am somewhat distantly related to our host and hostess of this evening. They were drowned — lost on the ill-fated *Ville de Paris*. This house belonged to them, and not very long afterwards it was torn down."

"But suppose that the present owner of the lot were to build upon it?" I suggested. "It would be necessary to hold these charming entertainments elsewhere?"

"Not at all," she said, laughing and waving her fan. "The

occupancy of the site by a real house would not interfere. It frequently happens, of course, that a building is put up on ground previously occupied by another dwelling. You must understand, though I might have supposed you knew it, that, while the material parts of a tenement may be removed at any time, its astral shell remains in perpetuity. Thus the ghosts of half a dozen or more dwellings may remain on the site occupied by a new and substantial structure. They are none the less real for being invisible to living eyes. The most remarkable instances of haunted houses that you have heard about are due to conditions of that sort, — several families of phantasms, perhaps, tenanted premises topographically coincident with a mansion which affords physical accommodation to people in the flesh. I trust I make myself clear?"

"Quite so," I replied politely.

This conversation was interrupted by the elderly gentleman with the pink nose, who seemed to be dissatisfied with something. Having poured out a water goblet half full of sherry from a decanter, he called for brandy, and with those strong spirits filled it to the brim. Then he took a caster of red pepper and sprinkled its contents liberally on the surface of the mixture. Raising the goblet to his lips, he drained its contents to the last drop and set it down with a sigh.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it has no strength. If only I could get a schooner of real beer."

The old lady regarded this performance attentively, with a lorgnette held to her nose. Said she sympathetically:

"That is the way with all pleasures in the after world. They seem to have no savor. Even the milk is chalk and water."

"I suppose that is why this mince pie tastes so insipid," I responded, toying absently with a bit of pastry on my plate.

"Of course it is," she said. "Don't you see it is only the ghost of a mince pie."

"Then it seems that —"

But at this point the banquet was suddenly interrupted by a convulsive swaying and creaking of timbers. The table rocked, the lights in the silver candelabra flickered, and all was darkness. Then, through a ray of brilliant sunlight, I saw the strange dining-

hall, the gleaming table, the ghostly banqueters all fade into the distance. Another moment of utter darkness, of creaking and swaying, during which I made a desperate effort to grasp and steady Mabel's chair. To my bewilderment, my hand touched a coil of rope. I heard familiar voices. There was a burst of sunlight. I sat propped up by cushions on the deck of the pleasure yacht *Undine*, surrounded by solicitous friends. Mabel, with her warm hand reassuringly clasped in mine, told me of my half hour's unconsciousness. I had fallen overboard in my attempt to recover her hat, and had been rescued only after sinking for the third time. Not until I had heard all this, could I banish from my mind my horrible experience in the house of the dead.





The Black Cat

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The Mysterious Card.

BY CLEVELAND MOFFETT.



RICHARD BURWELL, of New York, will never cease to regret that the French language was not made a part of his education.

This is why :

On the second evening after Burwell arrived in Paris, feeling lonely without his wife and daughter, who were still visiting a friend in London, his mind naturally turned to the theater. So, after consulting the daily amusement calendar, he decided to visit the *Folies Bergère*, which he had heard of as one of the notable sights. During an intermission he went into the beautiful garden, where gay crowds were strolling among the flowers, and lights, and fountains. He had just seated himself at a little three-legged table, with a view to enjoying the novel scene, when his attention was attracted by a lovely woman, gowned strikingly, though in perfect taste, who passed near him, leaning on the arm of a gentleman. The only thing that he noticed about this gentleman was that he wore eyeglasses.

Now Burwell had never posed as a captivator of the fair sex, and could scarcely credit his eyes when the lady left the side of her escort and, turning back as if she had forgotten something, passed close by him, and deftly placed a card on his table. The

card bore some French words written in purple ink, but, not knowing that language, he was unable to make out their meaning. The lady paid no further heed to him, but, rejoining the gentleman with the eye-glasses, swept out of the place with the grace and dignity of a princess. Burwell remained staring at the card.

Needless to say, he thought no more of the performance or of the other attractions about him. Everything seemed flat and tawdry compared with the radiant vision that had appeared and disappeared so mysteriously. His one desire now was to discover the meaning of the words written on the card.

Calling a fiacre, he drove to the Hotel Continental, where he was staying. Proceeding directly to the office and taking the manager aside, Burwell asked if he would be kind enough to translate a few words of French into English. There were no more than twenty words in all.

"Why, certainly," said the manager, with French politeness, and cast his eyes over the card. As he read, his face grew rigid with astonishment, and, looking at his questioner sharply, he exclaimed: "Where did you get this, monsieur?"

Burwell started to explain, but was interrupted by: "That will do, that will do. You must leave the hotel."

"What do you mean?" asked the man from New York, in amazement.

"You must leave the hotel now — to-night — without fail," commanded the manager excitedly.

Now it was Burwell's turn to grow angry, and he declared heatedly that if he wasn't wanted in this hotel there were plenty of others in Paris where he would be welcome. And, with an assumption of dignity, but piqued at heart, he settled his bill, sent for his belongings, and drove up the Rue de la Paix to the Hotel Bellevue, where he spent the night.

The next morning he met the proprietor, who seemed to be a good fellow, and, being inclined now to view the incident of the previous evening from its ridiculous side, Burwell explained what had befallen him, and was pleased to find a sympathetic listener.

"Why, the man was a fool," declared the proprietor. "Let me see the card; I will tell you what it means." But as he read, his face and manner changed instantly.

"This is a serious matter," he said sternly. "Now I understand why my confrère refused to entertain you. I regret, monsieur, but I shall be obliged to do as he did."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that you cannot remain here."

With that he turned on his heel, and the indignant guest could not prevail upon him to give any explanation.

"We'll see about this," said Burwell, thoroughly angered.

It was now nearly noon, and the New Yorker remembered an engagement to lunch with a friend from Boston, who, with his family, was stopping at the Hotel de l'Alma. With his luggage on the carriage, he ordered the *cocher* to drive directly there, determined to take counsel with his countryman before selecting new quarters. His friend was highly indignant when he heard the story — a fact that gave Burwell no little comfort, knowing, as he did, that the man was accustomed to foreign ways from long residence abroad.

"It is some silly mistake, my dear fellow; I wouldn't pay any attention to it. Just have your luggage taken down and stay here. It is a nice, homelike place, and it will be very jolly, all being together. But, first, let me prepare a little 'nerve settler' for you."

After the two had lingered a moment over their Manhattan cocktails, Burwell's friend excused himself to call the ladies. He had proceeded only two or three steps when he turned, and said: "Let's see that mysterious card that has raised all this row."

He had scarcely withdrawn it from Burwell's hand when he started back, and exclaimed: —

"Great God, man! Do you mean to say — this is simply —"

Then, with a sudden movement of his hand to his head, he left the room.

He was gone perhaps five minutes, and when he returned his face was white.

"I am awfully sorry," he said nervously; "but the ladies tell me they — that is, my wife — she has a frightful headache. You will have to excuse us from the lunch."

Instantly realizing that this was only a flimsy pretense, and deeply hurt by his friend's behavior, the mystified man arose at

once and left without another word. He was now determined to solve this mystery at any cost. What could be the meaning of the words on that infernal piece of pasteboard?

Profiting by his humiliating experiences, he took good care not to show the card to any one at the hotel where he now established himself, — a comfortable little place near the Grand Opera House.

All through the afternoon he thought of nothing but the card, and turned over in his mind various ways of learning its meaning without getting himself into further trouble. That evening he went again to the *Folies Bergère* in the hope of finding the mysterious woman, for he was now more than ever anxious to discover who she was. It even occurred to him that she might be one of those beautiful Nihilist conspirators, or, perhaps, a Russian spy, such as he had read of in novels. But he failed to find her, either then or on the three subsequent evenings which he passed in the same place. Meanwhile the card was burning in his pocket like a hot coal. He dreaded the thought of meeting any one that he knew, while this horrible cloud hung over him. He bought a French-English dictionary and tried to pick out the meaning word by word, but failed. It was all Greek to him. For the first time in his life, Burwell regretted that he had not studied French at college.

After various vain attempts to either solve or forget the torturing riddle, he saw no other course than to lay the problem before a detective agency. He accordingly put his case in the hands of an *agent de la sûreté* who was recommended as a competent and trustworthy man. They had a talk together in a private room, and, of course, Burwell showed the card. To his relief, his adviser at least showed no sign of taking offense. Only he did not and would not explain what the words meant.

"It is better," he said, "that monsieur should not know the nature of this document for the present. I will do myself the honor to call upon monsieur to-morrow at his hotel, and then monsieur shall know everything."

"Then it is really serious?" asked the unfortunate man.

"Very serious," was the answer.

The next twenty-four hours Burwell passed in a fever of

anxiety. As his mind conjured up one fearful possibility after another he deeply regretted that he had not torn up the miserable card at the start. He even seized it, — prepared to strip it into fragments, and so end the whole affair. And then his Yankee stubbornness again asserted itself, and he determined to see the thing out, come what might.

“After all,” he reasoned, “it is no crime for a man to pick up a card that a lady drops on his table.”

Crime or no crime, however, it looked very much as if he had committed some grave offense when, the next day, his detective drove up in a carriage, accompanied by a uniformed official, and requested the astounded American to accompany them to the police headquarters.

“What for?” he asked.

“It is only a formality,” said the detective; and when Burwell still protested the man in uniform remarked: “You’d better come quietly, monsieur; you will have to come, anyway.”

An hour later, after severe cross-examination by another official, who demanded many facts about the New Yorker’s age, place of birth, residence, occupation, etc., the bewildered man found himself in the Conciergerie prison. Why he was there or what was about to befall him Burwell had no means of knowing; but before the day was over he succeeded in having a message sent to the American Legation, where he demanded immediate protection as a citizen of the United States. It was not until evening, however, that the Secretary of Legation, a consequential person, called at the prison. There followed a stormy interview, in which the prisoner used some strong language, the French officers gesticulated violently and talked very fast, and the Secretary calmly listened to both sides, said little, and smoked a good cigar.

“I will lay your case before the American minister,” he said as he rose to go, “and let you know the result to-morrow.”

“But this is an outrage. Do you mean to say —” Before he could finish, however, the Secretary, with a strangely suspicious glance, turned and left the room.

That night Burwell slept in a cell.

The next morning he received another visit from the non-

committal Secretary, who informed him that matters had been arranged, and that he would be set at liberty forthwith.

"I must tell you, though," he said, "that I have had great difficulty in accomplishing this, and your liberty is granted only on condition that you leave the country within twenty-four hours, and never under any conditions return."

Burwell stormed, raged, and pleaded; but it availed nothing. The Secretary was inexorable, and yet he positively refused to throw any light upon the causes of this monstrous injustice.

"Here is your card," he said, handing him a large envelope closed with the seal of Legation. "I advise you to burn it and never refer to the matter again."

That night the ill-fated man took the train for London, his heart consumed by hatred for the whole French nation, together with a burning desire for vengeance. He wired his wife to meet him at the station, and for a long time debated with himself whether he should at once tell her the sickening truth. In the end he decided that it was better to keep silent. No sooner, however, had she seen him than her woman's instinct told her that he was laboring under some mental strain. And he saw in a moment that to withhold from her his burning secret was impossible, especially when she began to talk of the trip they had planned through France. Of course no trivial reason would satisfy her for his refusal to make this trip, since they had been looking forward to it for years; and yet it was impossible now for him to set foot on French soil.

So he finally told her the whole story, she laughing and weeping in turn. To her, as to him, it seemed incredible that such overwhelming disasters could have grown out of so small a cause, and, being a fluent French scholar, she demanded a sight of the fatal piece of pasteboard. In vain her husband tried to divert her by proposing a trip through Italy. She would consent to nothing until she had seen the mysterious card which Burwell was now convinced he ought long ago to have destroyed. After refusing for awhile to let her see it, he finally yielded. But, although he had learned to dread the consequences of showing that cursed card, he was little prepared for what followed. She read it, turned pale, gasped for breath, and nearly fell to the floor.

"I told you not to read it," he said; and then, growing tender at the sight of her distress, he took her hand in his and begged her to be calm. "At least tell me what the thing means," he said. "We can bear it together; you surely can trust me."

But she, as if stung by rage, pushed him from her and declared, in a tone such as he had never heard from her before, that never, never again would she live with him. "You are a monster!" she exclaimed. And those were the last words he heard from her lips.

Failing utterly in all efforts at reconciliation, the half-crazed man took the first steamer for New York, having suffered in scarcely a fortnight more than in all his previous life. His whole pleasure trip had been ruined, he had failed to consummate important business arrangements, and now he saw his home broken up and his happiness ruined. During the voyage he scarcely left his stateroom, but lay there prostrated with agony. In this black despondency the one thing that sustained him was the thought of meeting his partner, Jack Evelyth, the friend of his boyhood, the sharer of his success, the bravest, most loyal fellow in the world. In the face of even the most damning circumstances, he felt that Evelyth's rugged common sense would evolve some way of escape from this hideous nightmare. Upon landing at New York he hardly waited for the gang-plank to be lowered before he rushed on shore and grasped the hand of his partner, who was waiting on the wharf.

"Jack," was his first word, "I am in dreadful trouble, and you are the only man in the world who can help me."

An hour later Burwell sat at his friend's dinner table, talking over the situation.

Evelyth was all kindness, and several times as he listened to Burwell's story his eyes filled with tears.

"It does not seem possible, Richard," he said, "that such things can be; but I will stand by you; we will fight it out together. But we cannot strike in the dark. Let me see this card."

"There is the damned thing," Burwell said, throwing it on the table.

Evelyth opened the envelope, took out the card, and fixed his eyes on the sprawling purple characters.

"Can you read it?" Burwell asked excitedly.

"Perfectly," his partner said. The next moment he turned pale, and his voice broke. Then he clasped the tortured man's hand in his with a strong grip. "Richard," he said slowly, "if my only child had been brought here dead it would not have caused me more sorrow than this does. You have brought me the worst news one man could bring another."

His agitation and genuine suffering affected Burwell like a death sentence.

"Speak, man," he cried; "do not spare me. I can bear anything rather than this awful uncertainty. Tell me what the card means."

Evelyth took a swallow of brandy and sat with head bent on his clasped hands.

"No, I can't do it; there are some things a man must not do."

Then he was silent again, his brows knitted. Finally he said solemnly:—

"No, I can't see any other way out of it. We have been true to each other all our lives; we have worked together and looked forward to never separating. I would rather fail and die than see this happen. But we have got to separate, old friend; we have got to separate."

They sat there talking until late into the night. But nothing that Burwell could do or say availed against his friend's decision. There was nothing for it but that Evelyth should buy his partner's share of the business or that Burwell buy out the other. The man was more than fair in the financial proposition he made; he was generous, as he always had been, but his determination was inflexible; the two must separate. And they did.

With his old partner's desertion, it seemed to Burwell that the world was leagued against him. It was only three weeks from the day on which he had received the mysterious card; yet in that time he had lost all that he valued in the world,—wife, friends, and business. What next to do with the fatal card was the sickening problem that now possessed him.

He dared not show it; yet he dared not destroy it. He loathed it; yet he could not let it go from his possession. Upon returning to his house he locked the accursed thing away in his safe as if it had been a package of dynamite or a bottle of deadly poison.

Yet not a day passed that he did not open the drawer where the thing was kept and scan with loathing the mysterious purple scrawl.

In desperation he finally made up his mind to take up the study of the language in which the hateful thing was written. And still he dreaded the approach of the day when he should decipher its awful meaning.

One afternoon, less than a week after his arrival in New York, as he was crossing Twenty-third Street on the way to his French teacher, he saw a carriage rolling up Broadway. In the carriage was a face that caught his attention like a flash. As he looked again he recognized the woman who had been the cause of his undoing. Instantly he sprang into another cab and ordered the driver to follow after. He found the house where she was living. He called there several times; but always received the same reply, that she was too much engaged to see any one. Next he was told that she was ill, and on the following day the servant said she was much worse. Three physicians had been summoned in consultation. He sought out one of these and told him it was a matter of life or death that he see this woman. The doctor was a kindly man and promised to assist him. Through his influence, it came about that on that very night Burwell stood by the bedside of this mysterious woman. She was beautiful still, though her face was worn with illness.

"Do you recognize me?" he asked tremblingly, as he leaned over the bed, clutching in one hand an envelope containing the mysterious card. "Do you remember seeing me at the *Folies Bergère* a month ago?"

"Yes," she murmured, after a moment's study of his face; and he noted with relief that she spoke English.

"Then, for God's sake, tell me, what does it all mean?" he gasped, quivering with excitement.

"I gave you the card because I wanted you to — to —"

Here a terrible spasm of coughing shook her whole body, and she fell back exhausted.

An agonizing despair tugged at Burwell's heart. Frantically snatching the card from its envelope, he held it close to the woman's face.

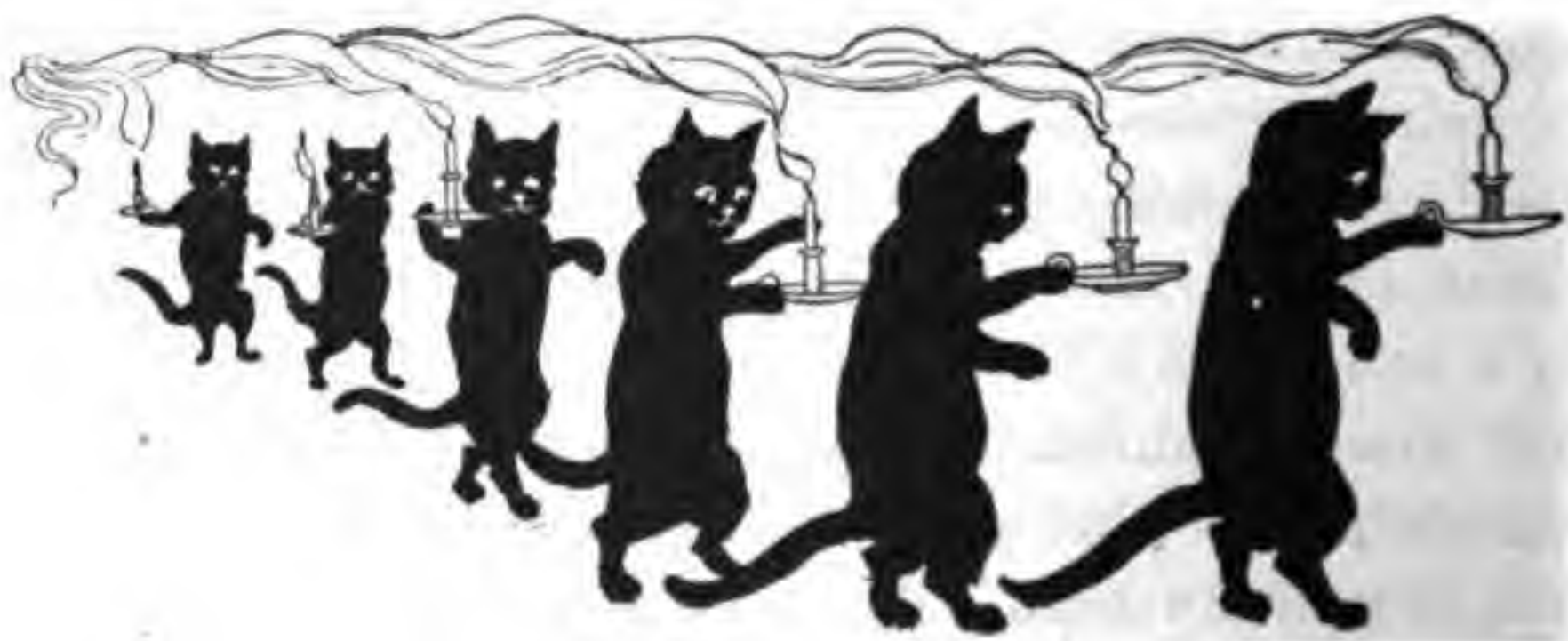
“Tell me! Tell me!”

With a supreme effort, the pale figure slowly raised itself on the pillow, its fingers clutching at the counterpane.

Then the sunken eyes fluttered — forced themselves open — and stared in stony amazement upon the fatal card, while the trembling lips moved noiselessly, as if in an attempt to speak. As Burwell, choking with eagerness, bent his head slowly to hers, a suggestion of a smile flickered across the woman's face. Again the mouth quivered, the man's head bent nearer and nearer to hers, his eyes riveted upon the lips. Then, as if to aid her in deciphering the mystery, he turned his eyes to the card.

With a cry of horror he sprang to his feet, his eyeballs starting from their sockets. Almost at the same moment the woman fell heavily upon the pillow.

Every vestige of the writing had faded! The card was blank!
The woman lay there dead.



A Telepathic Wooing.

BY JAMES BUCKHAM.



R. AMSDEN was utterly and hopelessly in love with beautiful Miriam Foote. But, in spite of his six feet of splendid manhood — or, perhaps, because of them—the young doctor was so timid in the presence of the fair sex, and particularly in the presence of the fascinating Miriam, that he could no more bring himself to utter a syllable of sentiment to that young woman than he could walk up to the venerable and dignified president of the State Medical Association and tweak his nose! The two things seemed equally preposterous and impossible.

At this juncture of affairs, curiously enough, there fell into the hands of Dr. Amsden a book that offered a magical solution of the problem that perplexed him,— viz., how to make love to the woman who had ensnared his heart, without being conscious of doing it. This book was called “The Law of Psychic Phenomena,” and its central theory was that the “subjective mind,” or soul, of any person, by a process of auto-suggestion, may enter into communication with the subjective mind of another person, at any distance whatsoever. A condition of sleep, either cataleptic or natural, is induced by the agent in himself; but previously to falling to sleep he must concentrate his whole mental energy and will-power upon the determination to convey a certain image, or message, or both to the subjective mind of the person with whom he wishes to communicate. Then away goes his spirit — his phantasm — while he is buried in unconscious slumber, appears in his very image to the person designated, and delivers the message with his very voice and manner. Truly, a marvelous theory, and of untold significance to timid lovers and bashful solicitors of every kind.

According to this theory, Dr. Amsden, in order to make tele-

pathic love to Miriam Foote, need simply drop to sleep, on a certain night, with a strong determination to send his phantasm to the young woman with an eloquent plea of affection. That was all. It was not even necessary for him to furnish the general substance, introduction, or any portion of this glowing address. He need simply specify that it should be passionate and rich in verbal color, — ordering a proposal much as he would a dinner at a first-class hotel, with perfect confidence that at the proper time it would be served in proper form. To be sure, this method of wooing was not in strict accordance with the traditional etiquette of such affairs. It might even be considered that this proposal by a sort of phantasmal proxy was hardly fair to the object of the experiment. A ghost is, after all, but a ghost, whether it be attached to a bodily tenement or be simply a spirit at large, and even the most heavenly minded young woman might cherish a prejudice in favor of a fleshly lover. On the other hand, however, the choice lay not between two methods of wooing, but between this and none at all; and how easy, how delightful a method of making a proposal of marriage. It could all be performed, like a painful surgical operation, during merciful sleep. Then the lover when next he met the lady in his every-day person would know by her manner whether she had accepted or rejected him. The more Dr. Amsden considered this fascinating project the more trivial seemed his scruples against its fulfilment. Indeed, he asked himself judicially, was it not a fundamental doctrine of metaphysics that only the soul was real, and so-called matter was simply the shadow cast by the spirit? This being the case, his vulgarly named ghost was in reality no ghost at all, while his bodily presence was the real phantasm.

Having arrived at this comfortable, though to the lay mind slightly abstruse, conclusion, Amsden wavered no longer. "I will do it," he said, jumping to his feet. "I will do it to-night — or — no, a few days must be given to subduing the flesh and concentrating the energies of the subjective mind. On Saturday evening, at the time of my regular weekly call, I will make an end to this painful uncertainty. Though I cannot but hope that she looks upon my suit with favor, I shall never dare to broach the subject of love openly in the flesh. My ghost — or, at least,

what is vulgarly known as a ghost — shall speak, and I will abide by the result.”

On his return from dinner that evening Dr. Amsden locked all the doors and darkened all the windows of his apartments. Then, after smoking a meditative cigar, he went to bed. It was barely eight o'clock in the evening when his head touched the pillow, but, as he had planned to send his image to Miss Foote at precisely nine o'clock, before that young lady should have retired to her chamber, he wished to have ample time to get himself to sleep. Besides, he was really tired and drowsy, which was certainly a favorable condition for his experiment. He had feared that he would be excited and nervous; but already the suggestion of sleep which he had been constantly reiterating for the past hour was beginning to tell upon his brain. The formula, “I am about to go to sleep, I am becoming sleepy, I sleep,” was having a most magical effect.

Dr. Amsden dropped into the misty chasm of slumber in less than fifteen minutes after getting to bed. But that fifteen minutes had been spent in strenuous command, on the part of the objective mind, that the subjective mind should go, at precisely nine o'clock, to the home of Miss Foote, present itself in the exact and correct image of the lover, and make an ardent appeal to the affections of the lady.

In about two hours Amsden awoke, bathed in perspiration, and feeling thoroughly exhausted. He was not conscious of having dreamed at all, and yet it seemed to him as if he had just shaken off a most horrible nightmare. He arose, lit the gas, and consulted his watch. It was just ten o'clock. “Thank heaven,” he cried, “I did not wake before the time!” He went back to bed, and fell instantly into the deep slumber of complete exhaustion, from which he did not wake until late the next morning.

For two days he did not see Miss Foote. Then he summoned up courage to call upon her. She came downstairs looking pale and anxious, and the moment that Amsden's eyes fell upon her his heart began to throb with suffocating violence. Undoubtedly his experiment had succeeded as far as the proposal was concerned — but should his attitude be that of the accepted or rejected lover?

Hardly noticing his stammering expressions of solicitude for

her altered looks, Miriam led the way into the drawing-room, and, motioning him to a chair, seated herself in a dim corner at the other side of the room. Then, with her blue eyes lowered and her fingers twisting nervously, she said: —

“Dr. Amsden, I owe you an apology. When you called two nights ago and asked me to be your wife I was too much agitated to answer you. To tell the truth,” she continued, reddening a little, “the eloquence of your words, their poetry and melody, so surprised and overcame me that I could not answer as you deserved. When I left you and walked to the other side of the room it was only that I might gain possession of myself, and when I looked up and found you gone —”

“Gone!” exclaimed Amsden, groaning audibly.

“Yes, gone like a spirit (here Miss Foote paused, while Amsden clutched at his chair, feeling as though his whole body were turning to sand and dribbling down upon the floor) without a word of good-bye, I feared that I had mortally offended you and that you would never come back to —”

“Then you were not angry because my ghost — because I left like a ghost? You wanted me to come back? But why?”

“I — I think you ought to know,” said the girl, blushing.

And the next moment Dr. Amsden was kneeling at her feet.

“I did it in a dream — no, I don’t mean that — I mean this is a dream. I ought to explain.”

“No, don’t try. I understand,” said Miriam softly.

The girl’s head sank forward on his shoulder. She was crying a little, but she suffered her lover’s arms to slip around her waist, and into his trembling hand she pressed her own.

It was done, the impossible, the inconceivable! And even Amsden felt in his heaving heart that he had never done anything so easy and so utterly delightful in his whole life.

It was true that Miriam did not understand, but Amsden felt that at such a juncture any explanations would be not merely out of place, but even indelicate.

To his credit be it said, however, that on one occasion before his marriage he attempted to confess to Miriam all the circumstances of his proposal; but while he was still struggling with his introduction she stopped him with a peremptory gesture.

"I don't understand a word about subjective and objective minds," she said, in a wounded voice. "All I know is that you made me the most beautiful proposal I had ever heard — I mean imagined — but of course if you want to take it back by saying that you were not responsible at the time —"

Whereupon Amsden was obliged to consume two delightful hours in assuring his sweetheart that he was a blundering fool, and that his metaphysical nonsense, translated, meant that it was his best self that had made that eloquent proposal, and that he was only afraid his every-day self was not one tenth good enough for her.





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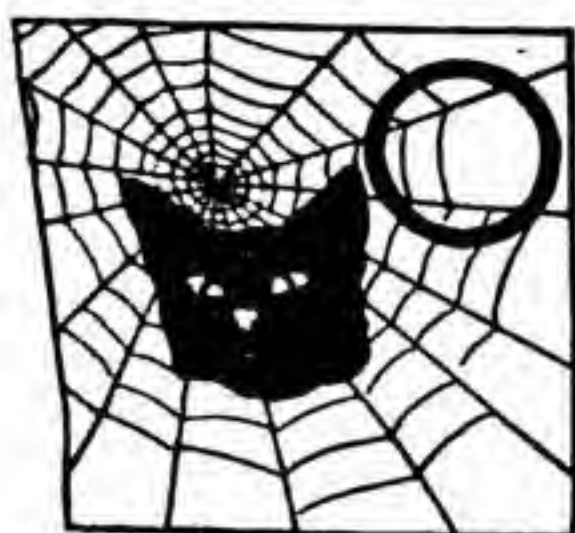
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THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO.,
144 High St., Boston, Mass.

"To Let."

BY ALICE TURNER CURTIS.



None of the streets leading from the park in the center of a town near Boston is a very attractive modern house with a history. It was built for the occupancy of a Mr. and Mrs. Leslie, whose mysterious deaths mark the beginning of this story.

The facts here recorded are just as I heard them. Indeed I was a resident of the town during the period in which these strange occurrences took place, and had a personal acquaintance with the people mentioned.

The Leslies had been married a year, were apparently happy, and were well and favorably known in the town. One morning a neighbor noticed that lights were burning in the Leslie house. He ran up the steps and rang the bell. There was no response, and after a few hours the neighbors decided that something was wrong inside, and that an entrance must be made at once. The front door was accordingly forced open, and as the men went in they could see into the room beyond the hall, the sitting-room. Mr. Leslie was sitting with a paper across his knees, apparently asleep, and on a couch near by lay his wife.

It took but a few moments to ascertain that both had been dead for some hours. Their faces were peaceful and composed; there were no signs of disturbance in the house.

Every possible inquiry was made. No trace of poison or of foul play could be found. Numberless theories were advanced, and the wonder and excitement over the tragic death of the young couple grew daily.

After some months their relatives removed the furnishings, and "To Let" appeared in the cottage windows. The house was immediately taken by a man from Boston, whose family consisted, beside himself, of his wife and two little girls. None of

this family had heard the story of the Leslie's, nor did they hear it until they had been in the cottage for some weeks.

One night, after they had occupied the dwelling for over a week, the man of the family was awakened by a sudden scream. His wife awoke at the same moment, and exclaimed: "One of the children must have the nightmare," but just then the two little girls rushed into the room, exclaiming, "What's the matter, mother? What are you screaming about?" Almost before they had finished speaking two more screams in quick succession rang through the house. The place was carefully searched, but no cause for the disturbance could be found.

The next night at about the same hour like sounds were heard. After that Mr. Weston made inquiries of the neighbors. None of them had been disturbed. One suggested that possibly a cat was shut up somewhere in the house and had made the noises heard, but a careful search of the entire premises failed to discover any such commonplace solution of the mysterious sounds.

A week passed without any recurrence of the midnight sounds, when one night Mrs. Weston awoke from a most terrible dream. She dreamed that she was lying upon the couch in the sitting-room. In front of her stood a young man who held a pillow in his hands. "I shall stifle you," he said clearly; "it's no use to struggle." Mrs. Weston dreamed that she tried to scream; that once, twice, three times she endeavored to rise from the couch to push away the pillow, but could not.

From this dream she awoke suddenly, and, as she lay endeavoring to overcome its impression, a gasping shriek, quickly followed by two more, awakened her husband, and again sent the little girls flying in terror to their mother's room.

This time Mrs. Weston held herself responsible for the terrible screams. "I've had a dreadful dream, and I suppose I screamed without knowing it," she said. She had hardly finished this explanation when again came the screams, the last dying away in a stifled moan.

The family was by this time thoroughly terrified. They had heard the story of the Leslie's, and without waiting for further experiences in the house they moved at once.

Their story got about the town, with the result that the house

was vacant for a year. Then a family, consisting of an elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. Walters, and their son, a young man about twenty-five, moved in. The remainder of the story was told me by this son, and I will give it in his own words as nearly as possible :

"I wasn't afraid of any haunted house. My father was deaf, so it would take a reasonably loud scream to wake him, and my mother was a sensible woman. The house just suited us. We got nicely settled in a few weeks, and my elder brother and his wife came out from Boston to make us a visit. The first night they were there I stayed in town for the theater. The train I came out in left a few minutes after eleven, and I reached the house at about a quarter before twelve. I was nearly ready for bed when a shriek like that of a person struggling for his life sounded through the house. I hurried into the hall, and as I did so my brother opened his door. Before either of us could speak a second and a third scream followed. By this time even father's deaf ears had been penetrated, and we all sat up talking the matter over far into the night before we felt like sleep.

"In the end we decided not to mention the occurrence. We thought of several possible explanations of the noise. The next morning we made a careful examination of the house and surroundings. We made inquiries as to late trains, thinking we might have mistaken the shriek of an engine for a human voice ; but all our conjectures led to nothing. We could find no satisfactory reason for the disturbance.

"I made inquiries about the Leslies, and found that many people believed that Leslie had stifled his wife, and then taken some subtle poison which left no trace ; but there was no evidence to support this theory ; no sign of poison had been found, no cause could be given for such an act, and nothing could explain the midnight screams. A week passed quietly, when one night my brother awakened our mother, telling her that his wife was ill. She had awakened from a bad dream almost suffocated, and my mother worked over her for some time before she was restored. She refused to tell her dream, but we were well assured that it was a repetition of Mrs. Weston's. The next morning my brother and his wife went to their home.

“I had one more experience in that house which I shall never forget. My father was to be out one night until midnight at the meeting of a society of which he was a member, and my mother and I decided to wait up for him.

“About eleven o'clock mother lay down on the couch and went to sleep. The room was brightly lighted, and I sat near the couch reading.

“Just as I heard my father come in I was startled by a sudden moan from my mother. I turned quickly toward the couch, and as I did so I saw plainly that the sofa pillow lay upon her face. I snatched it away, and awakened her with some little difficulty.

“Meantime my father had come into the room, and as he entered a scream, terrible in its nearness and intensity, rang out, thrilling us all with a sickening shock. We left the next day.”

This finished his story. No explanation of these happenings has ever been given. The Leslie's death remains a mystery, and to explain the Presence that occupied this cottage after their death would be to account for a side of life which we barely touch and cannot comprehend.

The house is still to let.



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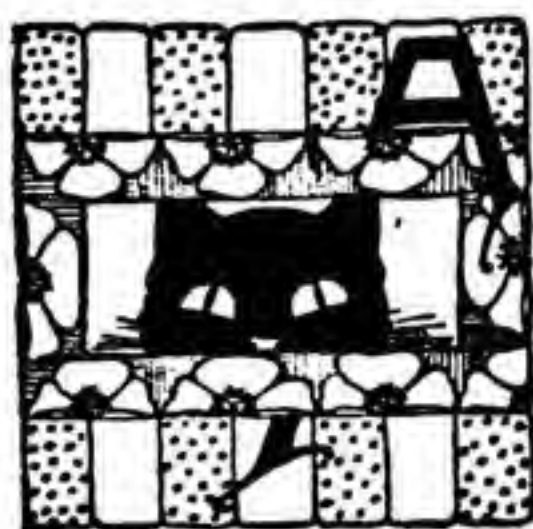
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The Mystery of the Thirty Millions.

BY T. F. ANDERSON AND H. D. UMBSTAETTER.



At eight o'clock on the morning of March 14, 1903, the Anglo-American liner, the *Oklahoma*, left her dock in North River on her regular trip to Southampton.

The fact of her departure, ordinarily of merely local interest, was telegraphed all over the United States and Canada, and even to London itself; for there was a significance attached to this particular trip such as had never before marked the sailing of an ocean steamship from these shores.

It was not because the great vessel numbered among her crowd of passengers a well-known English duke and his young bride, the grand-niece of a world-famous New York railroad magnate, that her sailing was heralded by such a blowing of trumpets, nor because she also had upon her lists the names of the august British ambassador to the United States, returning home on a brief furlough, the noted French tragedian, fresh from his American triumphs, and a score of other illustrious personages whose names were household words in a dozen countries.

The presence of all these notables was merely incidental. What made this trip of the *Oklahoma* an event of international interest was the fact that at this, the apparent climax of the great gold

exporting movement from the United States, now continued until it had almost drained the national treasury of its precious yellow hoard, and had precipitated a commercial crisis such as never before had been experienced, the *Oklahoma* was taking to the shores of insatiate John Bull the largest lump amount of gold ever shipped upon a single vessel within the memory of man.

Not even in the memorable gold exporting year of 1893, ten years previous, had any such sum as this been sent abroad at one time.

It was not the usual paltry half million or million dollars that she was carrying away in her great strong room of steel and teak wood, but thirty million dollars' worth of shining eagles and glinting bars, hastily called across the ocean because of the adverse "balance of trade" and the temporary mistrust of American securities by the fickle Europeans.

The mere insurance premium on this vast sum was in itself a comfortable fortune. Business men wondered why such a large amount was intrusted to one steamer. Suppose she should collide in the fog and sink, as one great ship had done only a few weeks before — what would become of the insurance companies then?

Suppose some daring Napoleon of crime should hatch a startling conspiracy to seize the steamer, intimidate the crew and passengers, and possess himself of the huge treasure? "It would be a stake well worth long risks," thought some of the police officials, as they read the headlines in the evening papers.

The *Oklahoma* was a fast sailer. Her five hundred feet of length and her twelve thousand tons of displacement were made light work of by the great clanking, triple-expansion engines when their combined force of fifteen thousand horse power was brought to bear upon her twin screws. Under ordinary conditions she ought to have made port on the other side in time to let her passengers eat late dinner on the sixth day out. Incoming steamers reported a brief spell of nasty weather in mid-ocean, however, and so her failure to reach Southampton on the sixth and even the seventh day was not particularly remarked.

The great American public had been busy with other weighty matters in the interim, including a threatened secession of the silver-producing States; and the departure of this modern argosy

with her precious freight had almost passed into history. For history in the year 1903 was anything that had happened farther than a week back — a day, if it was not of overwhelming importance.

If the big ship's arrival had been cabled on the eighth day, or even early on the ninth, it would still have found the public in a comparatively calm state of mind, for the mid-Atlantic storm would naturally account for a multitude of lost hours; but when the ninth lapped over onto the tenth and the tenth onto the eleventh and twelfth, with no tidings of the tardy steamer, surprise grew into anxiety and anxiety into an international sensation.

Of course all sorts of plausible theories were advanced by the steamship agents, the newspapers, and other oracles, including that of the inevitable broken shaft; and these might have sufficed for a day or two longer had it not been for another and much more startling theory that suddenly came to the surface and threw two continents into a fever of trepidation and suspense.

It was the following announcement in a leading New York morning paper that roused excitement to fever heat: "A new and most astounding phase has come over the case of the mysteriously missing *Oklahoma*. It has just been given out from police headquarters that 'Gentleman Jim' Langwood, the noted cracksman and forger, whose ten years' sentence at Sing Sing expired only a few weeks ago, was in the city several days previous to the sailing of the *Oklahoma* and went with her as a passenger, under an assumed name. Even at that very time the central office detectives were looking for him, as a tip had been sent around that he was up to some new deviltry. One of those clever people whom nothing ever escapes had seen him go aboard almost at the last minute, and gave an accurate description of his personal appearance, which was evidently but slightly disguised.

"Langwood is probably the only criminal in the country who would ever conceive and try to execute such a stupendous undertaking, and it is something more than a suspicion on the part of the New York police that he has smuggled on board a couple of dozen well-armed desperadoes, who could easily hold the entire crew and passengers in check and make them do their bidding, for a time, at least. The idea is so replete with thrilling possibilities that the entire community stands aghast at it."

It is to be noted that the public always "stands aghast" in such a case as this; but it is more to the point just now to say that the article went on, through a column or more, to describe in minute detail the circumstances attendant upon the departure of "Gentleman Jim" even to the number and shape of the bundles he had in his arms. The famous robber was very boyish in appearance, and one of the last persons in the world whom a chance acquaintance would think of looking up in the rogues' gallery. Evidently he was "out for the stuff," in most approved stage villain style, with more millions in the stake than even Colonel Sellers, of nineteenth century fame, had ever dreamed of. Of course this theory, which was already accepted as a fact, especially in police and newspaper circles, was quickly cabled across, and created such a profound sensation on the other side that even the London papers had to give it that prominent position which is usually reserved for American cyclones, crop failures, and labor outbreaks.

Upon the phlegmatic British government it acted much like an electric shock and nearly threw the foreign office into a panic; for was not the British minister plenipotentiary himself a passenger on the ill-fated *Oklahoma*, and possibly at that very hour being butchered in cold blood by a lot of Yankee cut-throats?

The thought was too horrible for a moment's endurance, and forthwith the cablegrams began to flash thick and fast between the foreign office and the British legation at Washington.

The result was that, within a few hours after the appearance of the paragraph, one of the fastest and most powerful of her majesty's cruisers, quickly followed by a second and a third, hastily steamed from Portsmouth Roads, the three spreading out north, west, and south, like a great marine fan, as they hurried to the rescue of the *Oklahoma* and the British ambassador.

Meanwhile, at the Boston, Brooklyn, and League Island navy yards three or four of Uncle Sam's white war dogs were getting up steam for a similar errand, and a small fleet of ocean-going steamers, specially chartered by New York, Boston, and Chicago newspapers to go in search of the absent leviathan, were already threading their way through the Narrows.

Not for years had there been such world-wide interest in an

ocean expedition. The newspapers commanded an unheard of sale, for everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation concerning the fate of the missing steamer, her six hundred passengers and her thirty millions of gold.

While the public was thus feverishly awaiting the news, certain discoveries were being made by the New York police, which only went to confirm their previous suspicions. Four or five other hardened graduates from state prison were found to be absent from their accustomed haunts in the East Side slums, although known to have been in the city just before the *Oklahoma* sailed, as was "Gentleman Jim," himself.

These discoveries had their natural effect upon the public mind, and the friends of those on board the steamer began to despair of hearing that even human life had been respected by the piratical band.

As to the British foreign office, this cumulative evidence threw it into a perfect frenzy, and it was only by a miracle that a declaration of war against the United States was averted.

Three days passed by after the departure of the big searching fleets, during which time all incoming steamers reported that they had not found a single trace of the *Oklahoma* either in the northern or southern route. Vessels from the Mediterranean, the West Indies, South America, all made the same ominous report.

The tension was terrible. Thousands could not even sleep on account of the mental strain, and the minds of some of the weaker actually gave way beneath it. The public by this time was convinced beyond a reasonable shadow of doubt that the robbers had successfully carried out their fiendish plan; but how? and when? and where?

When they opened their newspapers on the morning of the eighteenth day of suspense, they found the answer to the question, and the greatest marine mystery of centuries was solved.

In the small hours of the night there had flashed across the European continent, and under the dark waters of the Atlantic, this startling message from the representative of the *Union Press Association*:—

"LISBON, April 1.—The missing *Oklahoma* is disabled at

Fayal, Azores, where she was discovered by the *Union Press* special expedition. Many of the half-starved crew and passengers are on the verge of insanity. The officers tell a most astounding story of the steamer's exciting and almost fatal adventures. On the third night out, the *Oklahoma* suddenly came under some mysterious but irresistible influence by which she was carried rapidly out of her course towards the south. Every effort was made by the officers to bring the ship back to her course, but the big liner seemed drifting helplessly at the mercy of some powerful current. The compasses were useless, and the wheel no longer exercised the slightest control over the steamer's movements.

"Naturally the anxiety of the officers was in no way diminished when on the morning of the next day, which was then the fourth day out, another vessel, — a long low-setting craft of shining steel, — was discovered off the *Oklahoma's* starboard bow, about a mile ahead, but moving in the same direction. By careful observations it was discovered that the course of the two steamers was identical. Both were apparently under the same mysterious influence. Instead of sighting a rescuer, the *Oklahoma* had, so it seemed, only discovered another victim of the irresistible current!

"Time and again the *Oklahoma* attempted to signal the companion ship, but the latter made no reply. Close observation revealed that she was built on the whaleback principle, with nothing above decks save ventilators and signal mast, — but failed to discover any sign of human being.

"By afternoon their continued failure to bring the liner back to her course had so wrought upon the minds of her officers that their anxiety infected the spirits of the passengers, who were now aroused to the real danger that menaced them.

"When the fifth day dawned, with the *Oklahoma* hundreds of miles out of the regular transatlantic course, the gravity of the situation could no longer be concealed. Distress signals were kept flying, and all possible steam was put on with the idea of overhauling the companion ship and giving or receiving aid. To the amazement of both officers and passengers, however, in spite of every effort, the *Oklahoma* failed to gain a single inch on the other vessel. Before they had time to attempt an explanation of

this remarkable fact, amazement gave way to consternation. For just a moment a third vessel had appeared on the horizon like a messenger of hope; but no sooner had she been sighted than with the swiftness of lightning the mysterious companion craft turned half around and darted away to the southeast, with the *Oklahoma* following as helplessly as though she were in tow.

“In that moment the awful truth was revealed. The steel vessel was nothing more nor less than a floating loadstone, which by some mysterious power was dragging the great ocean monster hither and thither as easily as a magnet draws a toy ship from one side to the other of a mimic pond!

“Who was she, and what was her motive? Almost before those on board had asked the question, the answer flashed upon them. The thirty millions of gold! Beyond a doubt, it was their capture which she was planning to accomplish, either by luring the *Oklahoma* from the regular path of ocean travel, and looting her and her passengers at leisure, or by compelling her to run aground upon some remote rock or shoal.

“With this revelation a new horror unveiled itself. Equipped as they were only with the supplies for a short trip across the Atlantic, the overwrought minds of many saw starvation looming up before them. That night not a soul sought his berth. From time to time consultations were held between the chief officers, and many-colored rockets spit and blazed their signals of distress incessantly across the sky.

“At length, soon after dawn of the sixth day, orders were given to bank fires and hoist sail in the hope that the *Oklahoma* as a sailing vessel might free herself from the awful influence that chained her.

“But the effort was vain. Wind and sail proved as useless as wheel and compass against the fatal power of that mysterious craft which drew the *Oklahoma* after her as irresistibly as though the two vessels were united by an unseen hawser.

“The steamer had now become a scene of indescribable horror. Mealtime, bedtime, — all the customary routine was disorganized; and daily prayer meetings were conducted among the more emotional of the passengers.

“Finally, seven days after she had left New York, the officers

of the big liner united in one last desperate effort to offset the magnetic influence of the mysterious 'pirate.' The fires were revived in the engine room, the steam pressure in all the boilers was run up to the 'blowing off' point; then, suddenly, the reversing mechanism was applied and a shudder ran through the great floating city as the twin screws began to back water.

"For a few minutes there ensued a titanic tug of war such as the beholders had never before witnessed. The water astern was lashed into a lather of foam, and for a brief moment the triumph of steam over magnetism seemed assured.

"Only for a moment, however, for the cheer that had ascended from the anxious scores on the deck of the *Oklahoma* when she slowly began to back had scarcely died away when with a mighty crash a vital section of the overtaxed engines gave way, followed by a hoarse yell of consternation from the excited engineers and stokers — and both screws were helpless and still.

"With this failure hope was well-nigh extinguished; and the *Oklahoma*, with her precious freight and her 643 human souls, abandoned all active effort to escape. With not a sail of any kind in sight, she passively rolled and plunged southward for seven days after her strange and terrible pilot, from which, to add to the horror of the situation, no human sign had yet been given. The supply of rockets was now exhausted, and food was doled out in minute portions as to members of a shipwrecked crew in order to husband supplies.

"On the afternoon of the fourteenth day, when the exhausted passengers had reached the verge of distraction, a gleam of hope appeared on the horizon in the shape of a solitary steamer, bearing down from the southwest. A glance through the telescope proved her to be a fast and formidable British cruiser, evidently en route from South America to England.

"At this news a mighty shudder, half of hope, half of fear, seized the crowd assembled upon the deck. Would the British cruiser come to their assistance, and if so, would she, too, become a victim of the magnetic craft? For a moment their fate hung in the balance; then from three hundred throats rang out a hoarse cry of joy as the mysterious craft swerved, turned sharply and shot away over the surface of the Atlantic due north.

"The spell was broken. The big liner with her six hundred human souls and thirty millions in gold was freed from the power that had for so long held her captive. But crippled as she was by the accident to her machinery she was unable to proceed unaided, and was taken in tow by the British steamer, the *Midlothian*, and a day later was brought safely into port at Fayal.

"The *Union Press* steamer is the first to bring the thrilling news. The first officer of the *Oklahoma* and the saloon passengers, including Sir Gambrel Roufe, the British ambassador, accompanied your correspondent to Lisbon. A relief steamer is urgently needed, as the *Oklahoma's* engines are both disabled, and she will not be able to proceed for several weeks.

"The passenger thought to be 'Gentleman Jim' Langwood, proves to be the Duke of Medfordshire, now on his wedding trip with his young millionaire American bride."

Hardly had the excitement caused by this startling intelligence subsided, when it was once more aroused by a despatch from Providence, R. I., announcing the capture in the act of robbing a jewelry store of "Gentleman Jim" Langwood, and a gang of four other oldtimers, and by the following even more important cablegram from the Russian representative of the *Union Press*: —

"ST. PETERSBURG, April 2. — The identity of the mysterious craft by which the *Oklahoma* was drawn from her course has been established beyond a doubt. The vessel is a Hypnotic Cruiser, recently completed by a Russian inventor, named Slobodenski, and possessed of an electric apparatus by which any vessel can be brought completely under its control.

"Whether the Hypnotic Cruiser's bedevilment of the *Oklahoma* was merely a trial of power, or whether plunder was intended, can only be surmised. But naval lawyers say that this marvelous new invention will revolutionize naval warfare and necessitate the passage of stringent laws to cover a crime for which at present no penalty exists."

The Compass of Fortune.

BY EUGENE SHADE BISBEE.



FEW days after his return to New York from twenty years' prospecting in South America, Alfred Leighton found the following letter at his hotel:—

“BUENA VISTA, TARRYVILLE-ON-THE-
HUDSON, April 26, 189-.

“*Dear Alfred:* A moment ago, to my astonishment and delight, I ran across your name among yesterday's hotel arrivals. I won't waste words in telling you what pleasure this news gives me, but write at once to ask you to come up here with bag and baggage, so that we may talk over old times and compare notes as to how the world has used us since we parted thirty years ago.

“Telegraph when you are coming, and I will meet you at the train.

“Yours, as of yore,

“MELVILLE BARRETT.”

For a moment after finishing the letter Leighton stood dumfounded, his mind swiftly gathering up the threads of long-forgotten experiences and friendships. It was now almost thirty years since he and Melville Barrett had chummed together at college, but the letter and the signature were enough to recall the brilliant, luckless fellow who had been Leighton's roommate during the latter's senior year. As nearly as he could remember, Barrett, in spite of his mental gifts, had never got on in the world, and, at last accounts, had gone West where he had dropped out of sight apparently for good and all. And now, behold, he had turned up again in the character of a landed proprietor! Had Barrett at last struck it rich?

Five hours later when, after a drive in a well-appointed landau

through a winding avenue, the carriage stopped at a big colonial mansion, and Leighton was ushered into an imposing hallway, carpeted with oriental rugs and decorated with tropical plants and curios from many lands, his mind recurred to the same question. And during the dinner that followed, served by well-trained servants, in a tapestry-hung dining-room, and the hour spent examining the rare plants in the adjoining conservatory, Leighton found himself varying the question by the mental inquiry, "How had Barrett struck it rich?"

For an answer to this question he had not long to wait. As the two men sat together before the open fire in the library, over their Havanas and after-dinner coffee, reviving the experiences of years ago, Barrett suddenly exclaimed, turning to his companion: —

"I suppose you are surprised to find me, at last, a property holder, instead of the luckless, poverty-stricken chap you used to know. Very likely, you've been wondering whether I have fallen heir to a fortune." Then, hardly noticing his friend's evasive answer, he continued: "I have come into a fortune, but not through the death of friend or relative. In fact, the manner in which it was gained was so extraordinary that neither I nor the friend who shared the adventure have cared to speak about it. And people simply know that, like so many others, we struck it rich in the land of gold. But you, who were the companion of my college days, and so know that I never took any stock in the supernatural, will, I am sure, believe what I have to tell you, especially as I hold the proof. If its duplicate can be produced by human hands, then I am ready to accept any commonplace explanation that the maker may offer.

"The whole thing is as great a mystery to me to-day as when it happened, eighteen years ago. My friend Mitchell and I had been hunting in the mountains of Southern California for a couple of weeks, and were returning by easy stages to the stock ranch where we both were employed. One evening, about the third day of our journey, we made camp in one of the most picturesque spots in all that beautiful country. A deep green valley stretched before us, high, snow-crowned mountains on either side, while far away down the silver stream that flowed through the valley could

be seen the undulating country of the grape and orange — a full hundred miles away.

“ Mitchell had finished his duties as cook, and we had despatched a delicious supper of broiled venison, potatoes, and coffee, just as the sun was sinking beyond our vision. The camp fire gave forth a cheery glow as we sat and smoked our pipes, recounting the day's sport; while every now and then the stillness was broken by the deep howl of a gray mountain wolf, — a blood-chilling sound even to an old hunter, and thus altogether different from the bark and yelp of the coyote of the plains. Twenty years ago the Sierra Nevadas were alive with game, and many a time have I sat by the ashes of our fire on a morning early, and thrown stones at an inquisitive black-tail deer, undismayed by his first sight of man. On this evening, however, after we had finished our smoke and looked after our horses and pack-mules, we rolled in our blankets, and, with saddles for pillows and our heavy sombreros covering our faces, were soon asleep.

“ My next conscious thoughts were of warmth on my face, and I sat up suddenly to find the sun just above the treetops. Giving Mitchell a rousing slap on the back, I set about getting a fire, at which task he joined me a moment later. Soon we had started a tiny blaze, but the dew-damp wood would not catch according to my fancy and I stooped to blow it. It caught, and I raised my head. As I did so I saw the strangest figure that ever met my eyes.

“ At first Mitchell did not see it, for, though near, it stood just behind him. But as my look of amazement caught Mitchell's eye, with a ‘ What the devil is the matter with — ? ’ he turned his head; and the words died on his lips. What had so astonished me was nothing more nor less than the form of a man, but a man whose like I had never seen nor imagined. In the first place he seemed to be at the very least seven feet high, and, even shrouded as he was by the folds of his odd costume, magnificently proportioned. He was garbed in a flowing gown of white, wound around by a broad crimson sash, into which were stuck two daggers and a long curved sword with a handle of gold set with jewels; while a huge turban of oriental fashion, snow-white like his gown, crowned his head. Beneath the turban gleamed two eyes, small, but piercingly brilliant, while the lower part of

the dark oval face was half hidden by his most remarkable feature, a moustache, jet black, and as long as the horns of a big steer—a comparison which its graceful curves still further suggested. What finally riveted our attention, however, was neither the man's garb nor his features, but an object that he held in the curve of his right arm."

"And that was —?"

"Nothing more nor less than a human skull, of a size that seemed to indicate a man of even larger stature than the one before us. All these details flashed upon my mind like an image on the sensitive plate of a camera, but before I could have counted twenty with deliberation, he placed the skull upon the ground, and then, straightening himself up, pointed with one outstretched hand over my head, as though indicating something in the distance. Naturally, we both turned in the direction of that gesture, but seeing nothing unusual in the landscape, faced about again towards the figure. Then we looked at each other in blank astonishment. The man had vanished as completely as a soap bubble bursting in air!"

"Hidden?" said Leighton, laconically.

"Impossible; our camp stood in a perfectly open glade, at least two hundred yards from the nearest tree, so he could not possibly have reached a hiding place in the ten seconds our heads had been turned.

"As we stood there dumfounded, our eyes scrutinizing each other, the plain, the sky overhead, and finally the ground, Mitchell gave a cry of astonishment.

"‘Why, there's the skull!’ he exclaimed. ‘The man was real after all.’

"Sure enough, there was the skull, lying on the ground scarcely two yards from where we stood. For a moment neither of us stirred. Then with a common impulse we rushed forward and together raised the grewsome souvenir from the ground. At first it seemed much like any human skull except that it was unusually large, and polished so that its top glistened like a billiard ball. As we turned it around, however, a cry of astonishment broke from both. The eye sockets were not empty, but contained a pair of the oddest sort of eyes. They were perfect in shape and

expression, and though carved from what seemed to be deep blue glass, looked almost too lifelike for pleasureable contemplation. But what added to the uncanny effect of the lidless blue orbs was the fact that they moved, being evidently set on some sort of bearing. So weirdly fascinating was the strange object that the sun was high before we could compose ourselves sufficiently to sit down to our morning meal; and even then our conversation was entirely of the skull and of the strange visitor who had come and gone so mysteriously. In comparing notes we found that our remembrance of that visitor's dress and appearance agreed to the minutest details. Consequently if there had been any delusion it was one in which both had shared. But if the experience had been a delusion, how account for the skull? From time to time we glanced toward the spot where we had placed the uncanny object, half expecting that, too, would vanish. But no. It remained just where we had left it, its top glistening in the sun, its lidless blue eyes gleaming with an almost human expression. As I looked, for perhaps the twentieth time, at the gruesome thing I observed that the eyes were turned toward the left, and seemed gazing fixedly at the hillside above our camp. Seized by a strange idea I arose and turned the skull in the direction of the hill towards which the eyes looked. They stared straight ahead. Then I turned it in the other direction, and, to my astonishment, they looked towards the right. To make sure, I slowly turned it from one side to the other, and all the while the eyes kept their gaze riveted on the same spot. I had called Mitchell to observe the experiment, and he laughingly suggested that the skull was looking for the man who brought it there and then deserted it. But I was more serious. I had an idea concerning this strange phenomenon and was resolved to test the matter to the end. Holding the skull in one hand, I walked forward, every now and then turning the skull, whose eyes always turned in the same direction, as the needle of a compass points toward the north. I had in this manner gradually approached the hill, when it seemed as if the eyes had actually taken on a more intense gaze, and that that gaze was directed to a particular portion of the rocks which seemed to form a small recess. I moved forward more rapidly, the eyes continuing to stare at this place until I had reached the recess itself. The

next moment I found myself within a natural enclosure, surrounded on three sides by precipitous rock, so steep as to be almost barren of vegetation, save here and there a clinging vine. Again I looked at the skull. Beyond a doubt its deep blue eyes were directed towards a particular portion of the rocky wall marked by a small depression, shaped like a diamond. Setting the gruesome thing upon a flat rock, I purposely turned the side of the jaw toward the point where the eye had been directed, and breathlessly awaited the result. Slowly, steadily, those lidless eyes turned until they rested again on the diamond-shaped depression."

"And Mitchell?" said his hearer, "did this convince him?"

"Not at first, for he remained near our fire, watching my movements still with an incredulous smile. The smile faded, however, when a moment later I called him to my side and saying, 'Watch the eyes and tell me what you think,' began turning the skull slowly around on the flat rock. The eyes held their focus on the diamond-shaped incision, and I stood up and confronted my friend.

" 'Well,' said he, and this time his accent indicated great agitation, 'I believe you are right, and there's some mystery here; let's get to the bottom of it. I'll go to the camp for an axe.' Ten minutes later he returned with the only available tool we possessed, and I began hacking feverishly at the rocky wall, keeping the mark upon which the eyes were riveted as our guide. Before long we had a big slice of the rocky soil cut away, and Mitchell had just taken his turn at the work, when his axe suddenly buried itself in what seemed to be a soft shell of rock, the momentum throwing him flat on his face. The next moment a section of the earth, quite six feet each way, gave way, revealing to our astonished eyes a deep excavation. In the bright light of the morning sun which shone full upon it, lighting up its interior to the rear wall, it seemed about fifty feet inward."

"A sort of cave?" said Leighton.

"Yes, but one made by human hands, as we discovered as soon as we crossed the threshold. The walls were cut and carved in many curious devices, while around the three sides ran a shelf cut in the rock, on which reposed many bones piled in regular heaps.

A glance revealed the fact that they were human bones, — we were in some prehistoric sarcophagus. Presently, as our eyes became accustomed to the subdued light, we began to look about us more closely. I was examining a pile of bones at the end farthest from the opening, comparing them with the skull in our possession, when, finding them apparently of the usual size, I tossed a thigh bone carelessly back on the shelf. It struck the pile with more force than I had intended, and they all came tumbling to the floor; but as they fell they revealed what appeared then, and subsequently proved to be, a crystal casket. It was about eighteen inches long by six high, and a foot wide; and, as I took hold of it, it moved with my hand. Carrying it to the opening I set it down in the light. Then, for the first time, I saw that it was filled with a blue substance, whose nature I could not clearly make out, owing to the dust and dirt covering the case. Upon examining the lid I found that it was not hinged but simply set on over the top. A quick jerk brought it away, and there before our staring eyes lay a huge heap of blue stones, all cut, and polished to a dazzling brilliancy.

“ ‘Sapphires!’ cried Mitchell, and his eyes bulged from his head.

“ ‘Are you certain?’ I asked, almost breathless from amazement.

“ ‘Absolutely,’ he said. ‘Look at them,’ and he took a handful of the beautiful stones. ‘You never saw glass like that.’

“I thought as he did, but, being no judge of such things, was not too ready to let my hopes soar, only to be dashed to earth again. There must have been at least two pecks of them, ranging in size from a small pea to stones as big as the end of my thumb,—and all perfectly cut. Suddenly, as we stood gazing incredulously at the gleaming stones, my thoughts flew to the skull, and I ran to fetch it. As I brought it into the light I saw that its gaze was now riveted on the casket, the lidless blue orbs seeming actually to gloat over the piles of blue stones. A new thought flashed through my mind. Could it be —? Yes — undoubtedly — the eyes that we had thought only bits of blue glass were themselves sapphires, but larger and finer than any in the casket.

“Well, Mitchell and I were practical, first of all. As soon as we had recovered from our amazement we made a thorough search of the cave. Finding nothing more, however, we took ourselves and our precious burdens to the camp, and that very night we started for San Francisco.”

“And the stones proved really sapphires?” said Leighton.

“Sapphires! I should say so. The leading jewelers to whom we showed a few specimens upon our arrival in San Francisco, two days later, pronounced them gems of the first water, and gladly paid us twenty thousand dollars for sixty of the smaller stones. Upon parting company we divided the sapphires equally between us, and since then I have visited every capital of Europe, in each of which the stones have been pronounced flawless.”

“And that’s how you struck it rich?”

“Yes, but so far I have converted less than half of them into money. The remainder I have placed in the casket in a New York safe deposit vault, but the skull — ”

As he spoke he gestured toward an ebony cabinet just above his head. There, behind a glass door, stood a huge skull, whose lidless blue eyes, looking out toward the distant city, seemed to pierce every obstacle between itself and the casket of sapphires over which it still kept watch and ward.



A Surgical Love-Cure.

BY JAMES BUCKHAM.



ONE dull, gray afternoon in November I was sitting in my office in Raymond Square, deeply absorbed in an article in my *Medical Journal*,—the description of an experiment conducted by a famous French surgeon for the purpose of determining whether sight could be restored to a blind person by engrafting the live nerve of a dog's eye upon the shriveled and atrophied nerve of the patient's eye. So engrossed was I in the fascinating details of the experiment that I did not hear the door of my office open, nor was I aware of the presence of a second person until a peculiarly deep-toned, rich, and musical voice broke upon my ear.

“Have I the honor of addressing Doctor Marston?”

I looked up, and saw before me a tall and graceful young man, smooth-shaven, and dressed in the characteristic clerical garb of the Church of England. His face was singularly handsome, of the clear-cut Grecian type, and was lighted by a pair of large, thoughtful brown eyes. With the exception of the mouth, the whole face was both intellectual and spiritual; but there was a certain fulness and sensuous curve of the lips which suggested a strongly emotive and possibly passionate nature under this calm and priestly exterior.

“Yes, I am Doctor Marston,” I said, replying to the young clergyman's question. “Can I be of any service to you?”

“On one condition — possibly,” replied the young man, taking the seat which I indicated, and fixing his thoughtful brown eyes searchingly upon mine. For a moment we sat gazing intently at each other, and then I said, somewhat abruptly:—

“I beg to know the condition, sir.”

“It is this,” he replied; “that if I entrust my case to you,

you will promise to keep it entirely secret, scientifically or otherwise, until after my death, should that occur before your own. And, in any case, you must agree never to reveal my name in connection with the affair."

For some moments I sat turning over this peculiar proposition in my mind, conscious all the while that the brown eyes were fixed patiently, but anxiously, upon my face. At length I replied:—

"I have never as yet been called upon to undertake a case guarded by such secrecy as you seem desirous to throw about your own, and, to be frank, I dislike to commit myself to any transaction of the sort,—at least, until I know something of the nature of the trouble and the reasons for suppressing any mention of it. This much, however, I will agree to do. If you will describe the nature of your disease, I will then decide whether I ought to accept the case on the conditions imposed. Whether I accept or refuse it, I will agree to keep the matter a total secret, except so far as your own proposition gives me liberty to speak."

A slight smile flitted over the young clergyman's face. "Very well," he said; "I accept your word of honor, as a gentleman should, and will proceed at once to describe the malady which has, perhaps justly, awakened your suspicions. To come at once to the point, then, know that, impelled by your well-deserved reputation as an anatomist, I have applied to you to perform a surgical operation *for the cure of love-sickness!*"

I started, the suspicion that flitted through my mind mirroring itself unconsciously in my dilated eyes.

"Ah, no!" exclaimed my companion seriously, reading the tell-tale revelation of my face. "I am not insane. My mind is as clear and logical at this moment as it ever was in my life, and the request which I make, a little reflection will prove to you, is not only reasonable, but scientific.

"First, however, let me state to you the circumstances which make me desirous to rid myself of the passion which I have confessed, thereby anticipating the question which is sure to rise to your lips. You are aware, of course, that the High Church movement in this country, as well as in England, has resulted in the formation of certain brotherhoods of the clergy, bound

together by vows more or less approaching in strictness those which govern the clergy of the Church of Rome? "

"I was not aware of the fact," I replied, as the young clergyman paused for an answer.

"It is indeed so," he continued. "You will not be surprised, then, to know that by the vows of the Brotherhood of St. Michael, to which I consecrated myself soon after the days of my novitiate, celibacy is as strictly enjoined as upon the priesthood of the Church of Rome."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, carried away by some sudden feeling, which I cannot even now defend. "The more fools —"

But here I stopped, the great brown eyes with something like a flash of Olympic lightning piercing and enchaining mine. In another instant the deep, rich voice proceeded: —

"For ten years I have kept every vow of the brotherhood referring to woman, without a single spiritual struggle — wearing these restraints as Samson wore his chains. But something less than six months ago I met a woman —"

The young clergyman paused, throwing his head back against the green baize of the easy-chair in which he sat. For a moment I thought he had fainted, and sprang for a cordial; but, without taking his slowly opening eyes from the ceiling, he motioned me back, and continued, while an indescribably sweet and almost transfiguring smile lit his pale face: —

"A woman, said I? An angel! A vision of transcendent loveliness! She came into my life as a new star comes across the disk of an astronomer's telescope, shedding its undiscovered light from eternity for him alone. O my Ethel! My angel! My lips yearn toward yours, my arms grope out to clasp you! — My God! What am I saying? "

The young priest sprang from his chair and stood trembling before me. His face was livid with the exercise of some tremendous mental effort, and I could see that the white nails of his clenched hands were driven deep into the flesh. For a full minute he stood thus, and then his strong frame relaxed, and he sank back into his chair, white as the paper on which I write, and weak as a babe. This time I pressed the cordial to his lips, and he did not refuse it. Presently he looked up with a faint smile.

and said, "Now, sir, you see what my malady is. I have no need to describe it any farther."

I stepped to the window and gazed up into the gray sky, as if looking for a solution of my perplexity. But my mind remained as blank as the dull expanse above the city roofs. Was this man insane, or was he really, as he said, in his right mind? Could the force of a mere amorous passion for a beautiful woman so carry away one of his character unless the man's mental integrity was impaired? I turned suddenly, in response to the young clergyman's voice. He had risen, and was advancing towards me.

"Do you believe in phrenology, Doctor Marston?"

"Most assuredly I do not."

"Will you perform an experiment upon me to test the reasonableness of your doubt?"

"Do you mean by that, will I assume your case surgically?"

"Exactly."

I turned to the window again. Here was certainly an opportunity to contribute something to the discussion of a vexed scientific question. Are the functions of the brain localized in its structure? So say Gall, and Spurzheim, and not a few other eminent anatomists. Well, every practical experiment looking towards the solution of this question has its value. Here was a strong, vigorous man, evidently possessed by the amative mania. It would be an operation of little difficulty and no great degree of danger to uncover the occipital protuberance at the base of the brain, where phrenologists claim that the organ of love is situated, and then —

"Well, will you take the case?"

The clergyman's hand was on my shoulder. I turned and looked him squarely in the face. "Is it understood that you assume all the risk, and that you do not hold me responsible for the psychological result of an experiment which, so far as I am concerned, is purely physical in its character?"

"Certainly. We will have it so understood."

"Then you may call at my office to-morrow morning at eleven. Eat a light breakfast, and, as far as possible, avoid excitement of every kind."

It seemed strange instruction to be giving a clergyman; but the young man understood and nodded approval. In a few minutes he took his departure, and I returned to my *Medical Journal* — but not to read.

Precisely at eleven o'clock the next morning my singular patient walked into the office. I at once remarked upon his changed appearance. His face looked haggard, and there were heavy, dark rings under his eyes, appearing almost black at the inner corners of the lids.

"I have seen *her*," he explained heavily. "She was at All Saints Chapel this morning. It was impossible for me to retire, or I should have done so. I had to fight my desire to look at her, to speak to her. I had to fight like a wild lion, and it has told on me, as you can see. But, thank God, it is over now!"

"I hardly think you are in a fit condition to endure a surgical operation," I objected.

"For God's sake, do not put it off any longer, doctor!" exclaimed the young clergyman, clutching my hand. "I would rather die than endure another day of such moral agony."

"Very well," I said; "I do not consider the experiment a dangerous one in any case — only exhausting."

Five minutes later my patient, divested of coat, vest, and collar, lay stretched on the operating table. In five minutes more he was under the influence of ether.

My first procedure was to shave the dark, soft, silken hair from the lower part of the young man's head. I then made two V-shaped incisions with a lancet at the base of the skull, where phrenologists locate the organ of amateness, and raised the flap of skin from the skull. The next thing was to get at the brain itself, and this I accomplished by boring two fine holes through the skull with the smallest trephine known in surgery. The portion of the brain thus exposed, I was amazed to find, was in a highly inflamed condition. Instead of attempting to relieve the surcharged brain with any instrument, I now placed a leech at each orifice, and allowed a considerable amount of blood to be thus withdrawn. I then dressed the wound antiseptically, and closed it with sutures.

My patient soon came out from under the influence of the

anesthetic, but appeared very weak. I lifted him in my arms and carried him to the couch in my private room. Enjoining strict quiet, and, if possible, sleep, I left him alone for a couple of hours. At the end of that time, considering it safe to permit him to talk, I reentered the room with considerable curiosity, not to say agitation, and asked him how he was feeling. To my astonishment, he grasped my hand warmly, exclaiming that he would consider me his greatest benefactor as long as he lived. "For," he cried, "you have saved my soul from its otherwise certain ruin. Thank God! I feel now no more emotion at the thought of that woman than of any other of her sex."

I brought my patient some refreshment, and at three o'clock he left my office in high spirits, promising to return again the next day to report upon his condition.

For three weeks the Rev. Alexander Maeck — as I will call my clerical patient — haunted my office every day, and we became fast friends. During all this time he was entirely free from disturbing sentiments. The flames of love, he declared, were quenched, and he was supremely happy.

So favorably, I must confess, did this experiment dispose me towards the neglected science of phrenology that I at once began to direct my studies in that direction, and soon accumulated a large number of expensive books on the subject. I also began to write up the details of my experiment, so as to get the matter into permanent shape while it was still fresh in my mind.

About six weeks after the occurrences above related, and just after I had posted an order for several hundred dollars' worth of phrenological works, the letter-carrier came into my office and presented me with a large, square, cream-colored envelope. I tore it open carelessly, removed the enclosure from the inner envelope, and bent over two beautifully engraved cards which fell upon the table. They bore the names of Rev. Alexander Maeck and Miss Ethel Plympton.

The wedding was a strictly private affair; and perhaps the most remarkable thing connected with it was the fact that the would-be annihilator of Cupid was permitted to kiss the bride.

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For Fame, Money, or Love?

BY R. OTTOLENGUI.



I WAS supremely happy. I use the superlative because, in all truth, I had never been so happy before. The cause of this ecstatic condition was the very ordinary fact that I had asked Beatrice Van Alden to be my wife, and she had consented. I do not know what other men have felt under similar circumstances, but I can assure you that I thought myself a very superior sort of being. I held myself very erect as I walked down Broadway on my way to my office. Perhaps it might even be said that I "strutted." I don't know certainly. I believe that I blindly walked into several persons. I have an indistinct notion of apologizing more than once. At any rate, I am confident that I was excusable under the circumstances. A man feels such sensations as I was experiencing once only in a lifetime. This was my turn at happiness, as it were. I remember that I walked that morning because I felt compelled. I started in a horse car, but abandoned the stuffy vehicle after a single block. I could not endure confinement at such a time. You see I was so happy. And yet, when I look back upon that moment now, and view my situation critically, I see that had I been perfectly sane, I must have realized that I was actually in a serious predicament. I had asked Beatrice to marry me, and

she had accepted, in a dainty little note which greeted me at breakfast. It had been a most foolhardy piece of presumption on my part to propose to her, for the reason that I often found it difficult to pay my own bills. How then could I meet even the expense of feeding and clothing a handsome woman accustomed to the good things of life, — to say nothing of providing for the possibilities of the future?

I had known Beatrice for only a few months, but with me it had been love at first sight. I had devoted all of my spare time, and much of my cash, to the gratification of her little desires. I paid her marked attention, and, before long, became satisfied that she was not indifferent to my suit. Discretion whispered to me to wait till I had built my dove cot before catching my dove, but love shrieked in my ears day and night, "Take her now, or you will lose her." This seemed quite possible, for she was constantly surrounded by an admiring circle of men, wherever she appeared. My final proposing had been precipitated the night before, by a streak of jealousy which overtook me whilst at the opera. I had bought a box, at considerable pecuniary sacrifice, and she and her mother had accompanied me. Much to my disgust, several men dropped in to visit, and remained to converse. One man, who posed in society as a German count, particularly annoyed me. He monopolized Beatrice as though she were his personal property. Worse than that, she seemed quite willing for him to do so. I think, now, that this was but a feminine trick to make me anxious, and so to hurry the crisis. At least it accomplished that result, for I left the box, obtained writing materials and penned a formal proposal of marriage, which I slipped into her hand at parting. The result was the aforementioned note of acceptance, and the coincident happiness, that this morning had already reached the pitch where I longed for a confidant.

It was in this frame of mind that I entered the building wherein I occupied a suite of two small rooms, upon the door of which appeared my name, with the attractive words "Attorney at Law" beneath. As I stood awaiting the elevator, I mechanically allowed my eyes to run down a list of names of the other occupants. Suddenly my attention was arrested by one which seemed quite familiar,—that of Andrew Manning. I had known

a man by that name at college, where we had been close friends. After graduating, however, I entered the law school, whilst he went abroad, and I had never seen him since. On the way up, I spoke to the elevator boy, and my curiosity was whetted. From his account, it seemed that this Andrew Manning not only had his business offices in the building, but had taken a large suite here, where he lived in bachelor style. I at once sought his rooms. The office door was still locked, but upon ringing the bell-knob at the next door I was received by a servant, who, in response to my inquiries, said that Mr. Manning had gone out to breakfast, but would soon return. Upon expressing a wish to wait, I was ushered into a really cosy parlor, which at first impressed me as the most luxuriously comfortable little box that I had ever entered. The next moment I experienced a sensation of oddity in my surroundings, whose cause I was at a loss to name, as everything seemed so entirely in keeping with everything else that there was no incongruity. Yet there was an unconventionality about that assailed the senses. At length I discovered the primary cause. The walls, ceiling, and carpet were black. The latter, upon closer scrutiny, I found was not a solid black, as it appeared, but a black background into which figures were interwoven in dark blue. The effect was very rich. The walls were covered with jet-black cartridge paper, but this was relieved at intervals by small *fleur-de-lis* in burnished blue steel. The ceiling was covered with the same paper, studded with silver stars, arranged exactly as are the constellations in the heavens. In one corner was a crescent moon, which could be illuminated by electricity so as to light the room by night. A few of the planets could also be made to serve as electric lamps. The somberness which would ordinarily prevail in such a room was entirely obviated by the furnishings. Rich Daghestan rugs, and heavy silk Oriental portières in warm colors, partly lightened up the prevailing blackness, whilst the walls were so covered with pictures in gilded frames that the papering served only to heighten the general effect. The furniture was all in bright, though not gaudy, colors.

After taking in my surroundings in a general view, I began to walk around for closer inspection of the pictures, many of which I found to be rare gems. Presently I stopped before a frame

which excited my curiosity to the utmost. Whereas the other pictures had all been paintings in water-color, or in oil, this was merely a photograph, a portrait of a woman. That much I could discern, though I could not see the features. What riveted my attention was this : The photograph was a small card, cabinet size, placed in a rather large frame, surrounded by a wide mat. Covering the picture entirely was a black veil folded several times, and fastened to the glass at each corner by a red seal. This arrangement in itself was curious enough, but the mystery was heightened by the fact that a small gold hook had been driven into the upper edge of the frame, and that from this hook was suspended a bit of blue ribbon, at each end of which was tied a solitaire diamond ring. What could it mean? I had barely asked myself the question, when a footstep in the adjoining room warned me that Mr. Manning had returned. Reflecting that after all it might not be my friend, and that, in any event, it would not be pleasant to be caught in front of a picture so suggestive of a secret history, probably of a personal character, I hastily stepped across the floor and dropped into a chair. A moment later Mr. Manning entered, and, though changed, I at once recognized him as my old college chum. I arose and greeted him effusively, as was natural in my happy frame of mind. He took my hand cordially, remembering me also, but his manner was by no means demonstrative. On the contrary, I detected a certain reserve, a sort of dignified quietness of speech, which at first jarred upon me. Indeed I felt almost as though I had made a mistake in calling, and that my old friend was not overjoyed at renewing my acquaintance. In this, however, I was entirely wrong, for upon my attempting to depart, he peremptorily insisted upon my remaining to talk over old times. After that we became almost chummy,—at least I did, though he still exhibited that phlegmatism which was so foreign to his character, as I recalled it. Finally, in spite of this reserve, I began to feel so much at home with him that I ventured to direct the conversation to the veiled picture.

“I suppose, Andrew,” said I, “you must have traveled in many countries since we last met; you have brought home such a number of curios from foreign climes.”

"Another evidence, my friend," he replied, "of a poor deduction from good premises. Most of the pictures and *bric-à-brac* about this room attest a personal collection in many countries. But there their value as evidence ceases. I did not collect them myself; I simply inherited them."

"Inherited them?" I asked. "Why, none of your family have died, I hope?"

"No, but a very dear friend. You may even remember him. He was at college with us a short time, — a senior whilst we were sophomores, — Julius Kraig!"

"Not the tall, blond fellow, who was daft on the subject of music?"

"The same. He went abroad immediately after graduation, and traveled everywhere. I eventually met him in Paris. We became great friends and remained so till he died."

"What a pity that he should have died so young. For though we used to guy him, I always thought that he had the seeds of genius in him." Here I determined to venture upon a bold stroke. "But, tell me, Manning, why do you drape his picture with *crêpe*?"

"How do you mean? Oh! I see! You have been looking around my room, and allude to the veiled picture. You are wrong. That is not Kraig's portrait, though the *crêpe*, as you term it, is there as a memento of him."

"How? I do not understand."

"My friend, you have unwittingly touched upon a subject which is very painful to me; one upon which I seldom speak. But you are my old college chum, and I see that, unlike myself, you have retained your youth. I will tell you the story of that picture if you wish, but I warn you that it might be better for you not to hear it."

"Why? How can it affect me?"

"By shattering some of your ideals. By affecting your faith in human kind. Shall I speak?"

"If you please!" I was too anxious to hear the story to hesitate for such a seeming trifle.

"That you may fully comprehend the strange tale," began Manning, "I must first tell you something about Kraig. As you

have admitted, he was a genius. A greater musical genius has never lived, perhaps, and yet he dies without fame, almost unknown! I became very intimate with him shortly after reaching Paris. He had a bachelor suite on the Rue de la Paix. His principal room, a combination of parlor, smoking-room, and study, was fitted up exactly as this one is. Indeed, everything that is in this room was in his, except that picture which is veiled. Even the wall-paper and ceiling I brought over with me."

He paused, and I stared about with renewed interest in my surroundings. I began almost to feel that it was uncanny, this scheme of inheriting a man's belongings, and perpetuating his living-rooms to such an extreme as Manning had done. One could almost fancy that, if such things can be, Kraig's ghost would be about the place.

"Kraig had an odd theory about music," resumed Manning. His idea was like this: A man is an embodied spirit. Thought is an attribute of the spiritual man. Language is, as it were, thought materialized; a necessary form of transmitting thought, essential to the physical man, but not used at all by spirits. In simpler language, — Articulate words are used by physical man to convey his thoughts to other physical men. Some thinkers claim that the spirit not only abandons words, but does not even employ any form of sound with which to convey thought. Kraig counted this a gross error. He argued that if a spirit could perceive the thought of another spirit, clairvoyantly, magnetically, or in any manner which would exclude the will power of the thinker, it would be manifest at once that thought would be useless, since it would be universally known as soon as conceived. Or, at least, spirits would cease to exist as separate individuals, and must necessarily combine as a single mind. Such a theory would destroy utterly our preconceived notions of immortality. The individual would no longer exist as an individual, and at death would simply be swallowed up by this one great spirit mind. This idea is abhorrent to us. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly, thus far," I replied.

"Very well. The next step is to explain Kraig's notion of the transmission of thought in the spiritual world. This is accomplished, he believed, by means of music."

"By music? How ridiculous. Then the angels would all sing to each other?"

"Exactly so; but remember, they would not sing words. Words belong to the material sphere. Kraig claimed, with much reason, that the spiritual is present in man the animal, since man thinks and gives expression to his thoughts. This he does in two ways: by spoken words, the material method; and by music, the spiritual method."

"I don't quite grasp that," I objected.

"Yet it is perfectly simple. Your composer of music is merely a man who thinks out his ideas, and sets them down in musical tones instead of in words. This truth, of course, has not been grasped by the multitude, but it is only like the many others that we pass by, because they are so constantly present with us that we do not observe them. Kraig then argued thus: Here are two methods of conveying thought, — spoken words, and music. By the mathematical axiom, 'things equal to the same thing must be equal to each other.' Consequently, for every word in a language there must be an exact equivalent in a musical tone, since each represents a thought. The converse is not true, however, for the reason that the language of words is very incomplete, many fine shadings of thought being so incommunicable in one language, that we are forced constantly to borrow from others to meet our wants. Even the sum of all the languages of the earth cannot express thought as accurately as can music, for there must be as many variations of a musical tone as there can be conceivable phases of thought. Thus the spiritual transcends the material."

"But granting all this, to what does it lead?"

"It led Kraig to a wonderful invention. He explained to me that whilst there could be no accurate equivalent of all musical tones in spoken words, at the same time it is quite possible that music composed by a material man would so differ from true spiritual music that, whilst the latter would not be transcribable to human tongue, the former, probably, would contain no ideas that could not be translated into words. This, because the mind in its material environment would not think in music much beyond what the tongue could express in words. Do you get that?"

“Perfectly.”

“Kraig’s hope was to invent a new musical instrument which would accurately translate music. To be more explicit, his instrument when played upon would respond, not in ordinary tones, as does the piano, harp, or violin, but in actual spoken words, which words would be the equivalent, in thought, of the musical tones of the composition. In other words, the instrument, played upon like a piano, would respond somewhat as though a human voice were singing. Thus we should have the spoken words and musical tones blended in a single expression of thought. Was not that a grand idea?”

“It sounds like insanity to me,” I said dubiously.

“And to me, also, at first. Finally, however, I accepted the whole theory but endeavored to discourage Kraig from attempting the impossible. He would listen to my argument and shrug his shoulders with a smile, saying, ‘Nothing is impossible! Man may accomplish what he wills! If it is conceivable in thought, it is possible! The impossible cannot be conceived. The only difficulty is that the material man may wear out before the spiritual accomplishes his purpose. This, however, is no argument against endeavor, for what is unfinished in this life may be completed in another. We will begin where we leave off. So all progress counts in the total sum.’ Thus, you see, it was not easy to prevent Kraig from pursuing his hobby. Now I come to the story of the picture.”

Manning paused a moment, but I remained silent. Presently he began again.

“In Paris I met and loved a beautiful girl. To make this part of my tale brief, I will only say that after a few months’ acquaintance I was made excessively happy by her accepting me as her future husband. At the time, I had not seen Kraig for several days. I had never spoken to him of my love, because he always seemed so wrapped up in his music that all other topics of conversation were excluded. It was three days after my engagement when I walked up the stairs that led to Kraig’s apartments. I had become so intimate that I did not even knock, but turning the door-knob I entered this room, or, rather, the room which was like this. Kraig was not there, but before I

could look for him elsewhere I observed a new piece of furniture. It looked like a piano, and yet it was dissimilar, too, being like an upright piano, but double the usual length. Like a flash it broke upon me that this was Kraig's new instrument. I advanced to examine it, and, raising the lid, I noted the white ivory keys. There were no black ones. My curiosity was at once so great that I could not wait for Kraig's return. I was possessed with the desire to hear this instrument sing. I may say sing, because I have no other word that will express it. An evidence, you see, of the poverty of language. I touched a key and produced a prolonged 'Oh-h-h,' which was so like grief that I released the note quickly. I glanced around in search of some music and observed a freshly written manuscript lying upon Kraig's desk. This evidently was a composition made expressly for the new instrument. I took it with suppressed excitement, and with trembling fingers I began to play."

"Well?" I asked excitedly, as Manning paused. I was now thoroughly aroused by his weird tale.

"My friend," he continued, "I hope you will never experience the agony which was mine during the next few minutes. As soon as I pressed the notes indicated in the manuscript, a voice as from another world spoke, or sang, or chanted, — what you will; no words describe it. It was a combination of musical tones of supremest purity with words in English. There was the only incongruity or discord. The harsh gutturals of our language sounded out of place, and yet they told a sad tale that has been burned into my brain. I will repeat the words to you. The composition was entitled, 'The Wail of a Broken Heart.' The music began in a monotonous but melodious chant whose opening stanzas were devoted to an impassioned defense of the constancy of men, whose love, so the poet-musician declared, was no less often betrayed than was that of women. Then, leaping from the general to the particular the chant continued: —

" 'This I know, that I, myself,
Am just that doting fool that trusted all to one!
She came into my life but five short months ago,
Yet in that brief, sweet space of time, I've dreamed of joy

So great, that I have pitied those in Paradise
Who died unhallowed by such love as I thought mine!

“In these fantastic visions I have seen myself
By emp’rors crowned. In fancy have been hailed
Music’s greatest master! Musician, world-renowned!

“But dearer yet than emp’ror’s crown, within my heart
I prized the smile of love upon my sweetheart’s lips.
For she it was whose sacred love had aided me
To reach the pinnacle of fame. But these were dreams!

“Here the melody changed, this time wailing out in mournful cadences the story of how, an hour before, all the composer’s hopes had been dispelled by a brief note from the woman he had worshipped.

“’Twas thus she wrote: “Forgive me, Love!” What mockery
To use that word! “But I must tell the truth. Alas!
I have deceived thee. My love cannot enrich thy life!
I think I have no love — no heart — but in its stead
Ambition stirs my soul. To share thy fame I would
Have joined my life to thine. But I have changed my mind,
And now give all for wealth, which hath the mystic pow’r
To buy whate’er the heart may crave, including fame,
And love, perchance. And so I sell my love for gold!
For wealth I sell myself — and thee! Farewell! Forgive!”

“O God! that one so fair in form should be so foul
In soul! Ah! well! ’Tis over! Ended! Done! But —

“Here the voice ceased, for the composition had never been completed. By an odd chance, however, I once more rested my hands upon the keys, absorbed amidst a riot of thoughts, when to my horror the voice again was heard, a terrifying shriek, ending in a prolonged moan, as from a soul in purgatory. I quickly lifted my hands, and silence reigned. At length this became so oppressive that I hurried from the room in search of Kraig.”

Manning was silent a moment, overcome by the emotions aroused by the recollection of the scene which he had depicted.

“I found him in his bedroom,” he continued. “He lay prone

on the floor, with blood oozing from his mouth. I hastened to him, but he was already dead. A post-mortem became necessary, and it was discovered that the heart muscle had actually been ruptured. He had literally died of a broken heart. I found in his tightly closed hand a copy of the letter referred to in the music. The words were identically the same, so you see how accurately he had transcribed his thoughts into musical composition, and how admirably his instrument had portrayed his emotions as well as his music. The greatest shock to me was yet to come. I found the envelope in which the note had been folded, and within it was a diamond ring, one of those now hanging upon the ribbon. The inscription gave the name of the girl who had thus rudely sundered her engagement and killed my friend."

"Well?" I muttered, half expecting what he would say.

"Oh! I read there the name of the woman to whom I was engaged, that is all."

He left his seat abruptly and went to the window, with a low, empty laugh, which made my heart turn chill. I sat silent, with a portentous feeling of some impending evil. I deeply regretted that I had tempted him into this recital. Now, I understood it all. The veiled picture was that woman's portrait. The two rings were her two engagement tokens, presented to her by Kraig and by Manning. Presently he turned and came towards me. Standing near me, he continued with perfect control of his voice, and in that phlegmatic tone which now I comprehended. He had learned self-repression.

"You see," he went on, "poor Kraig, upon receiving that cruel letter, had, evidently, tried to drown his sorrow in his music. His great instrument had just been completed. Fame was within his grasp, when this blow which slew his love came upon him. With indomitable will he at once realized that, while his heart was so stirred, he might, perhaps, compose a masterpiece. So he sat down to write his own sad story in that spirit language, music. It was a master stroke of spirit over matter. His will would surmount the pain that a woman had caused him. Alas! Poor man! Even in the midst of this grand effort of the spirit to show its supremacy, the link that bound his soul to this earth was rudely snapped—his material self ceased to exist. The shock

had broken his heart, and so his beautiful spirit was released. But I? I was still alive to face precisely the agony which he had thus escaped. The same note which told him that the woman would have married him for his fame, confessed that she accepted me for my wealth. Of course that ended all. I covered her face with the veil, and hung the two rings where you see them. I took Kraig's things and brought them here. His rooms I have reproduced as you see, and because I wish to live alone. I have done the eccentric thing of making my home in an office building, away from the regular dwellings of the city. A morbid fancy, if you wish to consider it so. As to the wonderful instrument, that was injured on the way over, and was dumb when I opened it. Kraig being dead, there was none who could restore it."

"But what became of the girl?" I asked thoughtlessly.

"I do not know," he said absently. "To me Beatrice is dead!"

"Beatrice?" I asked with sudden surprise. "Did you say Beatrice?"

"Did I?" he asked, still dreamily. "I don't know. Perhaps I did. It was her name. Beatrice Van Alden."

No sooner had the words fallen from his lips than I started to my feet and rushed from the room. He tried to stay my flight, alarmed, I suppose, by my appearance; but I eluded him and rushed down the stairs and out of the building, never heeding where I went. All I knew was that my happiness had suddenly ceased. For hours I wandered about the streets like one crazed. When he told me that she—that woman who had been death to poor Kraig and misery to himself—that she was Beatrice Van Alden, my Beatrice, the pain at my heart was so keen that I would cheerfully have accepted surcease by sharing Kraig's fate. At last one ray of hope penetrated to my heart. She had accepted Kraig for his fame, and Manning for his wealth. Why had she accepted me? I have neither genius with which to win fame, nor that wealth which she counts so potent. Why then had she accepted me? For love. Why else? Then, after all, is not love the greatest power, and has not her heart at last been found by me? Then why not accept the situation, forget this horrible tale, and marry Beatrice? What would you do in my place?

A Hundred Thousand Dollar Trance.

BY EUGENE SHADE BISBEE.



HALF dozen greeting voices rang out from the group who were toasting themselves before the blazing fireside of the Bohemian Club, as Lloyd entered and approached them with his easy stride.

"Heard the news, haven't you, Lloyd?" asked one of the toasting group.

"I can't say — which news, Barton?" returned the other, at the same time accepting a hot toddy from the hand of an attendant.

"Of course I mean the news about our distinguished guest for the evening, Dr. Goode."

"I heard he was to be here, if that's what you mean; anything else?"

"Only that we are to have something entirely new on hypnotism, psychology, and occultism, — what you will, — in fact, our eyes are to be profoundly opened, if the word of our distinguished friend and president is to be taken; for Norris says the learned doctor will spring a few things on us that will put us to thinking."

"Coals to Newcastle, my dear boy — an old story — all the fellows have it, and are on the *qui vive* to catch the first news. I just came from the 'Holland,' and Claridge and Wentworth had me collar and elbow for an hour about it; 'twas all I could do to get away at all. Time the old fellow was here, isn't it?"

Lloyd glanced at the clock over the fireplace, handed his emptied glass to the servant, and then, first looking inquiringly about the room, dropped into a rocker, drew a cigarette from his pocket, struck a match, and settling himself comfortably, was at once one of the waiting assembly, all alert for the next comer.

His last inquiry was answered by the appearance of the man in

question, — Dr. Goode, — who came in with Norris, the genial president of the club, and with a nod to the group passed on toward the library.

The Bohemian Club was an organization of talented men in varied walks of life, who had, for mutual advantage and pleasure, leagued themselves together into one of these gregarious associations which find so much favor in big cities. Hidden away in the very heart of the metropolis, the club was as much apart from its noise and traffic as if it had been ensconced beneath the green foliage of some South Sea isle; within its portals were to be found treasures no other could boast; pictures hung upon its walls which bore signatures world famous in the new and reigning school; and, best of all, these very men were to be found beside the cheery fireside. Original manuscripts of celebrated books, and scores of operas, popular songs, masterpieces of sculpture, volumes of prose and poetry, all bearing their authors' signatures, filled the rooms, until the cozy place was a veritable museum of autographical treasure. No great man became its guest who did not leave with the club some such impress of his visit, and none touched our shores who failed to share its hospitality. Its membership was limited to a score, but upon the occasion of its monthly dinners, each member was entitled to a card of invitation for one friend; and the character of the entertainment offered was of such a nature that these cards were most eagerly sought. On this particular night there was not a single vacant chair when the president opened the festivities with the formal "Gentlemen, I greet you," in a small "sherry-and-bitters," which was drunk by all standing. Then for an hour or more the thirty odd of us devoted ourselves to one of the club's famous dinners, spiced by a merry story, half overheard here and there, told by some one to his neighbor, and the occasional response to an impromptu toast suggested *à propos* by another. Finally, when the last course had been served and the brandy and coffee gave place to sparkling champagne, our president arose, and, smilingly bowing to us all first, and then toward the guest upon his right, said, "Gentlemen, allow me to present to you one whose name alone, long since become a by-word in the scientific world, is sufficient introduction, the world-famous psychologist, who has

honored us by his presence to-night, Dr. Richardson Goode, of London."

A burst of applause greeted his words, as Dr. Goode arose and faced the company. The appearance of the man would have claimed attention anywhere; tall and powerfully made, he dominated the assembly not merely by his figure, but by a face whose most striking feature was a pair of piercing gray eyes that gleamed from beneath bushy black brows. To add to this impression of strength, the smooth-shaven face was deeply lined, the jaw was square and determined, in fact, his whole presence was both massive and imposing.

As his eyes wandered with an amiable gleam from face to face until they fell on my own, I seemed to feel that they were looking right *into* me rather than merely *at* me, and I recall wondering at the time if others felt their influence in the same way. But there was small time for such speculation then, for, in a full, deep voice, that eminently became the man, he began a talk on the new developments of hypnotism, that, as he warmed to his subject, became so intensely interesting as to rivet the entire attention of his audience and hold them spellbound. Of course we had all seen and read of experiments in this subtle science, but none of us had ever heard of such marvelous results as Dr. Goode claimed not only to have witnessed, but to actually be able to accomplish himself. Receiving our silent acknowledgment of the fact that many things could be achieved through hypnotic suggestion, he went so far as to state that it was entirely possible to cause any disease to actually manifest itself upon a subject to whom it had been suggested, while under the spell of the operator, that he had the disease. He claimed that the entire physical organism of man was so influenced by the brain that results suggested would speedily follow the trial. A man to whom liquor was a most nauseating dose, drank it greedily and with most evident enjoyment when told by the doctor that he was very fond of it. This we could not gainsay, but if his assertions had up to this point met with no open opposition, so much cannot be said for the startling one which we were called upon to accept in childlike faith a moment later, and there were many incredulous smiles and a few open laughs and cries of "No, no, doctor, that's

too much," and, "Come, come, now, go it gently, doctor," to which he only smiled patronizingly, at once taking another tack. At this point his eyes wandered about the company, until presently he was looking intently at, and, to all appearances, addressing himself solely to, me. As I listened, I found his words grow confusing; I wondered if the champagne or the heat of the room had made me drowsy. Then gradually, as I looked into those gleaming, deep-set eyes, his voice grew faint and far away, the objects in the room faded until I could see nothing clearly except that massive, smooth-shaven face with the lamplight shining full upon it. Finally that, too, receded, until, as I tried uselessly to arouse myself from what I felt to be a most unbecoming position, I saw only two burning coals of fire gleaming at me from apparent space; then I knew no more. Whether my unconscious state had lasted ten minutes or as many years I never could have told, but later, from the others, I learned that I had been asleep about five minutes. It was with no surprise, however, that I found myself again looking at the master of this art, and when I heard him say, "Now, Mr. Brooke, let me have that cheque, please," I found I held a paper in my hand, which I passed up to him without an instant's hesitation. He read aloud a cheque payable to himself and bearing my signature; it was for a large sum and drawn on the bank in which I was a partner. My amazement must have shown itself in my face, for he smilingly passed it back to me and asked me if it was my signature. I was bound to acknowledge it. "But where did I get the pen and ink, doctor?" I cried, thinking I had him.

"Oh, you went into the library and wrote it," he answered, — a statement in which he was upheld by the entire assembly.

Norris here interrupted with a question which brought us all back to that assertion of the doctor's which had met with such skeptical reception. This was nothing more nor less than the claim that his was the power to so thoroughly infuse the mind of a subject with a certain idea as to make that idea become a fixed fact, and the desired result follow; which assertion was crowned by the statement that the brain having sole control of the physical being, if he should suggest to some young man, the subject of a hypnotic trance, that he was an old man, decrepit and feeble,

his subject would become so thoroughly imbued with the idea that physical transformation would follow, and a young man would grow old before our very eyes.

"I don't mind laying any reasonable wager against such a power, doctor," said our president.

"Very well," answered the doctor, "I am quite ready to accept your proposition, providing a subject can be secured who is willing to assume the risk, for I tell you frankly I do not believe that I can restore to him his youth. We may fell the sturdy oak, but who can restore it? We may destroy the most magnificent works of Nature, but who has the power to create even the most insignificant?"

A soft, musical voice broke gently in upon him, saying, "Gentlemen, I'll make you both a proposition; I am ready to have Dr. Goode try his powers on me, with one proviso, that the winner give me his winnings."

The voice belonged to Lloyd, and the attention of the entire company was attracted by his offer. One of the brightest stars among the younger journalists, his many exploits in that enterprising profession were well known to his friends and indeed to the public, but it seemed beyond belief that he would run the risk of losing his youth and strength at one blow for the sake of journalistic fame or even for a fortune, large or small. Yet the desire of the company for the experiment was at such a heat that cries of "Bravo! Good for Lloyd!" rang out, for a full minute drowning Norris's attempted reply. When finally he could make himself heard, he said, "Well, doctor, for my part, I will accept Mr. Lloyd's offer, and if I lose the wager, will present him with whatever sum you may mention."

"This is perfectly agreeable to me, Mr. President; and since the gentleman assumes such a risk of living fifty years in half as many minutes, I would suggest that we make the sum a large one for the sake of the beneficiary; would \$100,000 be satisfactory?"

Ordinarily the sum named might have excited comment, but as the doctor's wealth was reported fabulous, while Norris was known to be a triple millionaire, the size of the wager seemed nothing extraordinary, and it was accepted in a moment.

"And now, gentlemen," proceeded Dr. Goode, "I must ask absolute quiet and perfect attention; you must all aid me by remaining as nearly passive as possible. As for you, Mr. Lloyd, you must give yourself quite entirely to me and not endeavor to thwart me; though," this with a confident smile, "you cannot do that if you will."

Then followed a discourse upon the power of the brain over the body, a discourse so interesting, so impressive, in short, so magnetic, that Lloyd was almost forgotten, when our attention was restored to the subject of the experiment by the doctor saying, "Now, my friend, you are not feeling very well, but it will not last long; you will soon gain more strength, but, at your age, you cannot hope to recover as rapidly as in your youth; let me see, how old did you say you were? Oh, yes; seventy on your last birthday, so it was. Well, well, that's a very good old age, though your beard is not very white yet."

I sat directly opposite Lloyd, and when the doctor made this remark about the beard, I noted that the young journalist *had* a beard, which rather confused me, for I had always thought he wore only a moustache. Meantime, Dr. Goode kept talking to him in a monotonous tone. Lloyd's eyes were closed, and he lay back in his chair as if in sleep. I cannot recall distinctly what the doctor said, but as I looked I fancied a change crossed the features of the subject; he surely did not look so young as he used. I was watching him closely, forgetful of everything save the fact that some strange fascination kept my eyes on his face. Yes, beyond a doubt, there had been some change taking place in not only his face, but his whole body, something I felt but failed to grasp. As I struggled to define the change, much as one endeavors to recall an indistinct dream, I was suddenly aware of the doctor's voice saying, "You are quite bald, aren't you, Mr. Lloyd?" and saw that person put his hand up to his head. It was actually bald, with a heavy fringe of snow-white hair ending just above his ears! I saw it distinctly, but, as I recalled afterward, it gave me no shock, but rather came as a natural sequence of the whole evening's occurrences. Then the deep voice again monotoned, "Will you kindly step over to the mirror, Mr. Lloyd?" And still unmoved, I saw that it was an old man who

left the chair and tottered around the table to the mirror over the fireplace! He smiled as he moved, but looked at none of us. When he reached that point and looked at his reflection in the glass, he turned around, and, with a cackling chuckle to the company, said, "Well, Mr. Norris, the experiment has been rather a success, don't you think?" and Norris, without a word, rose from his chair, stepped into the library for a moment, returned, and handed him a cheque. If I thought anything of his silence, it was that he was too agitated for words.

Lloyd put the cheque in his pocket, chuckled after the manner of an old man, and in a cackling voice said, "Now I hope you will excuse me, gentlemen; I'm not feeling very strong, ha! ha! ha! I'll have to get you to identify me in the morning, Mr. Norris." He ambled across the room, the door closed behind him; he was gone. With his departure the nature of the monstrous experiment we had just witnessed seemed, for the first time, to burst upon us. In a moment all our excited interest was transformed into a sickening horror, and with a common impulse we rushed panic-stricken out of the door and into the night.

We never saw Lloyd again, but we heard from him. Just a month after, our president arose at our dinner, and, drawing a letter from his pocket, said, "Gentlemen, I have a letter here from our late friend, Lloyd; it came to-day, and fully explains itself; it is as follows:—

"CARACAS, VENEZUELA, Jan. 20, 18—.

"FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THE BOHEMIAN CLUB:

"In writing to inform you of the death of Dr. Richardson Goode, of London, on his way to this place to join me, I am able to add a line which will explain to you the remarkable experiment of which you were witnesses less than a month ago. During my last visit to London, I met the late doctor at a lecture, and, becoming deeply interested in his wonderful powers, cultivated his acquaintance with a view to perfecting myself in the art. To some extent, I succeeded, and have, on several occasions—notably, the last time we dined together at the Bohemian Club—been of considerable assistance to him in influencing his subjects when he was experimenting upon several simultaneously. The doctor learned his

profession by long years of deep study in India, and I think you will agree with me when I say that he learned it well. Knowing his power as I did, an idea flashed across me. I needed money; journalism was too tedious a road to wealth; I wrote to Dr. Goode and made him a proposition. Being not over-scrupulous, he accepted it on half shares, and at once sailed for New York. The result of his trip and consequent introduction to the Bohemian Club you all know. My dear boys, it was a put-up job; he did not hypnotize *me* at all; I did not grow old; he hypnotized *you*—every one of you, with my humble aid—and made you believe you saw it all,—my aging, the tottering across the room, the bald head and cackling laugh; yes, you saw it all during hypnotic sleep! I was forced to leave you rather abruptly, owing to the waning power of the doctor over so many. Of course I needed no identification at the bank, since I had changed none, and I readily cashed the cheque and sailed for this place. But I shall leave here at once; I have made my fortune now, and intend to run no risk of prison bars, for I have bought a fine plantation in a near-by country where extradition does not obtain, and shall settle down and become an ideal cocoa planter. I dare say I shall marry one of the many beautiful señoritas of the country, and if any of you boys ever find your way down here and should run across me, you will find no heartier welcomer or more hospitable host than

“Your late companion,

“GREVILLE LLOYD.”



The Man with the Box.

BY GEORGE W. TRIPP.



IN a certain quiet corner, one Cahill keeps a cozy snugger to which I am partial — especially when returning from an up-country outing. One sultry evening in July, I arrived at his place at the hour of 10 P. M., somewhat used up, for I had passed a busy day on my wheel over a country road since dawn, making kodak notes of certain views I needed for future reference. Entering my favorite restaurant, I gave a generous order and devoted myself to the matter of refreshment. Supper over, I ordered another bottle of the beer I had been drinking with my lunch, and lighting a cigar, sat at luxurious ease, too tired even to glance over the evening paper that lay on my table.

As I sat drowsily smoking, my attention was attracted by the noise of a moving chair in my rear. I turned somewhat suddenly, to find sitting at the table behind me a peculiar-looking person. He was possessed of a long, narrow face that was half buried in a heavy, iron gray beard of extraordinary length. His eyebrows, of the same color as his beard, were bushy and bristling, and meeting in the center of the line of his nose, gave to his face an air of concentrated purpose, borne out by a pair of keen, glittering eyes that peered sharply from beneath them.

“Kodakist?” queried he, with the brusque, familiar air of one who eschewed conventionalities, as he caught my eye.

“I am an artist, sir!” I replied stiffly. His undue familiarity annoyed me.

“Ah, indeed? A distinction without much difference, in my mind; — they’re essentially quite the same —”

“Not at all the same!” I rejoined, ruffling.

“Pardon me, — no doubt you think so; but, after all, it’s a mere matter of one’s point of view. Did it ever strike you, when

thinking of these matters, how few are the primal principles on which are based the innumerable inventions of modern times? " •

"Can't say I've thought much about it!" I tartly replied, sipping my beer and wondering how to rid myself of this preposterous bore.

"For instance, as an artist, you are very likely aware of the recent successful experiments in photographing color?"

I nodded in cold affirmation.

"Then you are probably aware it is generally admitted that the differentiation of one color from another to the eye is occasioned simply by the fact that each color imparts a different number of vibrations to the second of the ray of light it reflects to the optic nerve?"

I admitted a knowledge of this theory.

"Very well; you are possibly also aware that the difference between one tone and another, in musical sounds, lies merely in the different number of air vibrations to the second produced by each respective sound?"

I intimated that I was also aware of this fact.

"Very well; here we have two quite diverse channels through which the principle of the sensibility of the nervous system to vibratory impressions operates."

"Well, what of it?" I asked impatiently, as he paused and sat regarding me with his bright, glittering eyes.

"Simply this: why should not the sense of taste be referred to this same principle?"

He arose as he spoke, and drew from under his table a small box. Bringing it over, he placed it carefully on my table, after which, without apology, he removed my kodak from where it lay near my elbow, to the floor beneath, and seated himself, unasked, opposite me. The box was of cubical shape, made of some fine, richly grained wood, and polished till it shone like the cherry-topped table at which we were sitting. Pivoted on the top of it was an arrow-headed index hand, made of brass and about four inches in length. The side of the box facing me was studded with a row of brass push-buttons.

"Kodakist?" queried I, ironically, returning his first question.

"No, my dear sir, I am not; neither am I a confidence man;

nor am I, as your manner might seem to imply, even what you Americans term a 'crank.' But," said he, suddenly leaning forward and tapping himself briskly on the forehead, "I do confess to a degree of enthusiasm over a certain discovery of mine — an enthusiasm you will presently share if you will give me a few moments of your leisure."

My distaste for the fellow was not lessening; but his speech was civil in its way, and his brusque, eccentric ways amused me. I write occasionally for the press. Here was a character, and I resolved to study him a bit. I rapped for the waiter.

"Excuse me, sir," said my peculiar companion, as the knight of the apron appeared; "it is my privilege first, I believe, under the circumstances. Waiter!" he added, tossing a silver dollar down on the table, "two glasses of water, please."

That functionary stared.

"Sir?" quoth he, with mouth open.

"Two glasses of water, please, and there's something for your trouble."

The sight of the money seemed to restore the waiter's equilibrium, for, picking it up, he felt of it, put it in his pocket, and retired with chin elevated. In a moment he reappeared with two glasses of water, deposited them on the table, winked at me, and again retired with chin still elevated.

"Rather mild potation you've ordered," I observed, with a quizzical glance at my eccentric companion.

"The water?" said he somewhat absently, as he blew the dust from the throat of a small key; "oh, that's all right; you shall drink your favorite beverage presently."

Carefully fitting the key into some aperture in the side of the box facing him, he turned it a little, as if to try the wards; then, pushing the box aside, he suddenly leaned forward, fixed on me his peculiar eye, and abruptly asked: —

"Are you not possessed of a somewhat vivid imagination?"

I acknowledged to being endowed with a fair share of that faculty.

"Do you not write for the press occasionally?"

I admitted that I was something of a scribe.

"So I thought, so I thought," said he, tapping the box thought

fully; "an artist — a man of letters — a person of imagination. Just the person I seek. But talking is dry work, particularly to a listener. Let us first drink," continued he, pushing one of the glasses of water towards me.

"Oh, really, you must excuse me," I demurred, with a furtive eye on the box, which I began to distrust, "water after beer — I couldn't, you know — and —"

"Oh, bother the water," he impatiently interrupted, suddenly turning the box around and pushing it over to me.

In the side of the box that had been facing him was set a large glass-covered dial, around the margin of which was printed, in small characters, a number of words, radiating in the alignment of their letters from the center. In this central point of the dial was pivoted an index hand, the finger of which at present rested on a blank space which broke the circle of printed words. I bent closer to examine these characters. To my surprise, I found they constituted a remarkably complete list of the most popular of the beverages known to the bibulous world. The more noted brands of ale, beer, brandy, whisky, rum, and gin appeared, together with many of the most celebrated vintages of wines. There was also listed a number of the fancy drinks so dear to the American heart. The milder beverages found place, too, — both hot and cold, — even water being included. Beneath the dial was inserted, in a small hole, the key the man had just been manipulating.

I looked up inquiringly. "Name your beverage," said he.

"If you mean that I am to name a favorite beverage from that list, why, I should say Bass' ale," I replied, somewhat puzzled.

"Very well," said he; "kindly turn that key till you see that the indicator above points to the words 'Bass' ale.'"

I complied.

"Take up your glass!"

I obeyed.

Swiftly drawing the box to him, he turned the brass arrow on its top till it pointed at me, and then pressed one of the push-buttons.

"Look at your glass!"

I turned my gaze from the box to the glass that I held in my hand. To my amazement, instead of water, there shimmered in

it with an oily bead an amber-hued beverage, most uncommonly like, in appearance, the ale I had just been drinking.

"Taste of it," said my strange acquaintance.

I tasted it — though somewhat gingerly.

"Bass' ale!" I exclaimed, astounded.

"Yes," he observed, with an air of satisfaction, "and, as you'll find, a particularly fine brew."

Curious to investigate this novel trick, I took a few moderate sips of the stuff. The fellow was right. I am somewhat of a connoisseur of fine ales, and I found this one excellent.

"A capital trick! I perceive you to be a master of the art," I observed smilingly.

"A paltry dabbler in legerdemain?" he exclaimed with irritation. "I had attributed to you a finer perception than this. I am aware that in person and manner I may seem eccentric, but, believe me, these appearances are not the fruit of an ill-balanced head or an evil heart. They are the ugly crusts, so to speak, begotten of bitter experiences and deferred hopes."

He sat silently regarding me for a moment, and then continued: —

"Sir, I have a brief story to tell, and a proposition to make to you. Whether or not you accept the latter, you are confessedly a knight of the pen, and may find some use to make of the former; will you listen?"

The fellow really was getting interesting. I nodded my willingness to hear him.

"I am," he continued, "by profession a model maker. I was brought up to the business, and, having a natural aptitude for the work, came to be counted among the best in my line. Having an original turn of mind, together with a natural facility of execution, I made a specialty of developing the crude ideas of inventors who lacked the technical knowledge and practical experience necessary successfully to complete their various conceptions. Thrown, thus, in contact with minds groping along original lines with more or less cleverness, my own ingenuity was stimulated, and I was led, at last, into a line of original investigation and experiment that resulted in a most wonderful discovery.

"Even to outline clearly to you the nature and methods of

these researches and experiments would take too much time. Suffice it to say that the flower of my discovery stands before you in that box. In that polished cube of wood is incrustated a marvelous device, equal in importance to the telephone, typewriter, phonograph, or any other of the mighty group of great modern inventions.

"You look incredulous; but I assure you my words are well advised, as I shall presently demonstrate to your entire satisfaction.

"This wonderful little apparatus that stands before you, I call a Universal Beverage Differentiator. By a proper manipulation of its mechanism, in conjunction with a certain exertion of psychological power on the part of the operator, any beverage held or recently touched by a person within a radius of sixty feet of the box, and at whom this projector on top may at the time be pointed, will, to that person's sight and taste, be converted to any beverage indicated at the moment by the pointer of this dial that you see set in the side. Moreover, the impression will hold good until neutralized by the action of certain parts of the apparatus, that, when brought into play by the operator, serve to dispel the hallucination."

As the stranger paused, as if waiting for me to remark upon his strange disclosure, I took a long breath, tossed away my cigar, sat upright, and, like a sensible cosmopolitan, laughingly observed, "Rats!"

The stranger frowned.

"You choose to be facetious," he dryly remarked; "I might, however, rejoin that, in this case, it seems to me that 'Snakes' answers all purposes equally as well," added he, pointing to a name on the dial.

I bent closer and examined it. Amidst the list of beverages was printed, in smaller characters than the others — as if to render it inconspicuous — the word "Snakes."

For an instant, I looked at it in stolid wonder. Then suddenly I surmised its ostensible function. Sitting back in my chair, I regarded my strange companion for a moment in silence; then, putting back my head, I exploded in a fit of laughter.

"Well," said I, as I recovered my breath, "my friend, all I've

got to say is, that if you conjure up snakes as cleverly as you seem to change beverages, you hold the key to considerable sport in your hands."

"To a better purpose than that of mere sport, I should hope," he somewhat gravely replied. "But if you are as incredulous as your words would imply, it seems to me it would be but justice, at least, to give me a chance to demonstrate beyond dispute that what I have related of this box is literally true."

I intimated that I was willing, "providing," I added, with a laugh, "you don't turn on the snakes."

"You may rest assured as to that, sir. Although," he added, with some gravity, "should I do so, you would find it no laughing matter."

"And now, pray mention some wine of which you are particularly fond," said he.

I named a certain sherry I had observed on the dial, and of which I am very fond. Hardly had he swept the indicator to the place, when the pale amber of the ale before me deepened to the ruddy brown of the wine I had called for.

Taking up the glass, I smelled of the stuff, then tasted it. Unquestionably, so far as my physical senses evidenced, it was the brand of sherry I had named.

I set down my glass and regarded my companion with a puzzled look.

"My friend," I dryly observed, "these transformations, on the face of them, appear quite marvelous; but any clever master of legerdemain will do things apparently as wonderful. I shall be glad to be convinced of the truth of your extraordinary statements; but for anything you've shown me as yet, these curious phenomena may be but an adroit piece of chemical jugglery."

The stranger listened with an impatient frown. Then his countenance cleared.

"Sir," said he, "under the circumstances, your doubts are natural. Though it is not my intention that you shall go from here to-night unconvinced, any test involving immediate publicity of my discovery would be fatal to certain cherished purposes of mine. For the present, it is imperative that the strictest secrecy be observed in this matter; and though you may wonder some-

what at my sudden confidence in a perfect stranger, I am not so unsophisticated as may appear, and know, in a way that would surprise you, that my trust is not misplaced.

"Now, I would propose as a test both simple and crucial, that you operate the box yourself on the next person who may drink at one of these tables. With ordinary discretion, no suspicion need be aroused as to the source of the hallucinations, and on the success of the experiment I am willing to stake my chances of convincing you."

I bit my lips and smiled.

"Your words are more flattering than convincing," I replied, "but I've no objections to such an experiment."

"Very well," said the stranger; "and now listen," he continued, with one finger held up by way of emphasis. "I must briefly explain the method of operating the box. In the first place, it is essential that the operator should be possessed of sufficient imagination to recall at will the taste, odor, and appearance of the beverage he may desire to project into the imagination of the drinker. It is not necessary that this mental picture be powerful on the part of the operator. The faintest suggestion in his mind of the desired effects will suffice, as certain plates in the apparatus — brought respectively into play by the dial indicator — are so constructed as powerfully to develop this mental effort of the operator; while what, for the sake of convenience, I will call the projecting current, conveys these effects through this brass arrow on top into the nervous economy of any person at whom it may be pointed, and who may be drinking any liquid within a radius of sixty feet of the box, — providing, of course, the indicator in the side dial be set at the name of the imagined beverage. Now this row of push-buttons which you observe set in the side of the box regulates the strength of the hallucinations. The first one on the left gives a very powerful impression; the one next it a milder one, and so on down to the sixth and last, which gives a very faint effect.

"By the way, it is not necessary that the projector be held on the subject, once it lines up with him. It suffices simply to sweep it past him. The impression he will thus receive will remain until dispelled by the action of the neutralizing mechanism, which

is operated by these two large buttons set in the end of the box. When the operator desires to neutralize the effects of the apparatus on a subject, he simply lines him up again with the projector and presses the white button. Or, if several persons are under influence, he may break the spell with all of them simultaneously by pressing the red button, which does not necessitate the use of the projector in conjunction with it. Thus, you see, the operation of the box is extremely simple; and I should be very glad if you would put it to any test these instructions may have suggested."

I had followed him through these details with a grave countenance. Inwardly I was convulsed with a curious mixture of wonder and mirth. If only a clever fakir, what possible lay could the fellow be on? Perhaps a matter of a desired loan on the alleged apparatus. Still, for a confidence game, the plant seemed unnecessarily elaborate. Juggling so clever as this would be a goose which would lay more golden eggs in legitimate paths than in crooked ones.

"My friend," I observed, scanning him sharply, "as I've said, your proposition of a test seems made in good faith. If sincere, you, of course, will not object to my trying these experiments without your presence, I suppose?"

To my surprise, he rose at once.

"None at all, sir; in fact, I was about to propose such an arrangement myself," he frankly replied. "I will absent myself for an hour from these premises," added he, glancing at his watch. "That will give you time to experiment to your satisfaction. But before going, I would say that while I want you thoroughly to satisfy yourself in this matter, you will see, I am sure, the necessity of keeping within judicious bounds. A hint to a person of your discretion should be enough."

"Oh, and one thing more: try any plate named in the list, but as you value your life, don't tamper with the 'snake' plate; — remember! have nothing to do with it!"

During the latter part of this conversation, a lull in the evening trade of the place had left us alone. At this juncture, however, a gentleman entered, bowed smilingly to me and, passing on to another table, ordered some sandwiches and a glass of milk. I

knew him as a promising young physician who was strongly opposed to the use of stimulating beverages.

My companion leaned over to me with twinkling eyes.

"There's a subject for you," he whispered; "try him! Here comes his lunch," he added, rising, "and as you seem to have understood correctly my instructions, I now will leave you to experiment to your satisfaction by yourself;" then, nodding me "good-evening," he withdrew.

I was nonplussed.

I had so far doubted the fellow's sincerity in desiring a genuine investigation of his alleged discovery; but there of course could be no possible collusion in this case.

How would he get out of it? His audacity amused me. I would humor his game till I saw its point, at least. Under cover of the evening paper, I set the indicator of the box at "milk punch." Then, waiting till my medical acquaintance reached for his glass of milk, I pushed the No. 1 button, called up the proper mental picture, and slowly lined him up with the brass projector.

It was not without an anticipatory thrill that I did this, and then I smiled at my absurd perturbation. The stranger would very likely return presently, and, alleging an improper manipulation on my part in excuse of the failure of the experiment, defer his straw test until the arrival of some confederate who would enable him to effect a "fake" demonstration for my benefit.

As these thoughts were passing through my mind, the doctor suddenly pulled out his watch.

"I declare," he called to me, "I had nearly forgotten an engagement I have for this very hour!"

Rising hurriedly, he caught up his glass and took a hasty gulp. Hardly had the beverage passed his lips ere he slammed the glass down on the table, caught himself by the throat, and snorted, coughed, and choked as if he had swallowed vitriol.

I sprang to my feet and stepped over to him.

"What's the matter, doctor?" I asked in dismay, catching him by the arm.

"Matter?" he wheezed between his snorts and expectorations; "I ordered a glass of milk, and they've sent me in milk punch!"

Just taste of that, sir!" said he furiously, picking up the glass and handing it to me.

I smelled it, tasted it. It was milk — and nothing but milk! Not the faintest trace of any other taste or odor.

For a moment I stood confused. Then I pulled my wits together.

"Doctor," said I, dumping the contents of the glass into a cuspidore, "I am at fault myself. I just now ordered a milk punch for the person you saw sitting at my table as you entered. He has stepped out for a moment, and the waiter has made a natural error. I must beg a thousand pardons."

The doctor — by nature a pleasant fellow — had by this time somewhat recovered. His countenance cleared, he laughed good-humoredly, and expressed regret at having shown temper over a trifle. Nodding me a pleasant good-evening, he hastily departed to his engagement.

I resumed my seat, and sat regarding the mysterious box before me with an odd mixture of feelings. My manipulation of this apparently potent apparatus had been conducted, so far, in a spirit of skeptical levity, but my last experiment had put another face on the matter. I began to feel a little nervous about making further experiments on my own responsibility.

Throwing the evening paper over the box, I sat doubtfully considering the matter, when a couple of tough-looking characters swaggered in. Taking seats at a table, they ordered some beer and sandwiches, over which they proceeded to discuss the contents of a scrap of paper which one of them had produced.

Others now began to drop in, and, shaking off my nervous doubts, I gave my attention to a judicious manipulation of the box under cover of my paper.

Up to this time, I still had been obstinately possessed of a suspicion that the effects apparently produced by this alleged apparatus — even in the doctor's case — had been but a clever piece of legerdemain. The marvelous hallucinations that invariably seemed to follow every trial I made with this mystic battery were too much for my skepticism. I found my doubts resolving into a critical enthusiasm, and I entered upon further experiments with a wondering and growing delight in the occult powers of

this cube of potent mechanism. In short, without exception, they confirmed all that had been claimed for this apparatus by its inventor, and created a degree of confusion in the mind of Cahill's phlegmatic head waiter that, I think, had never been visited on that organ before.

Before long I saw that I was going too far with this sort of thing. Relighting my cigar, I leaned back in my chair and awaited the stranger's return with impatience. Convinced, from what I had seen, of the veracity of his statements, I was now burning with curiosity to know the nature of the proposition he had to make me.

I had, so far, refrained from tampering with the "snake plate." As I sat waiting, I found my thoughts persistently reverting to this forbidden fruit. The unpleasant sensation which I at first experienced upon thought of it gradually grew duller with each recurrence of the matter, and, in place of aversion, there presently arose an itching curiosity to try this plate. However, the stranger's warning was yet in my ears, and I had seen enough by this time to convince me that he was sincere and knew whereof he spoke.

And yet — was not there the mild button? I had tried the brandy plate on myself with this button set, and found it reduced the hallucination to a mere shadow of effects. I would try the forbidden plate with it! on myself, of course — possible consequences forbade other experiment.

Disencumbering the box of the paper I had so far kept over it, I pushed the mild button, set the indicator at the forbidden point, and with one finger held prudently over the neutral button, slowly turned the projector till it bore full on me. Reaching out my left hand to my glass, which I had previously refilled from a fresh bottle of Bass' ale, I somewhat hesitatingly touched it. At the same time I mentally conjured up a mild type of a garter snake.

As my fingers touched the glass, I was suddenly seized with a qualm of nervous apprehension; but bracing myself for a possible shock, I firmly grasped it and pulled it to me.

For a moment I observed nothing. With an odd feeling of relief I was about to re-examine the dial, thinking I had made some

error, when I was startled to find my gaze irresistibly drawn back to my glass by an overpowering fascination. The color of its contents was changing. From a pleasant amber it was rapidly passing to an ugly, venomous green; and as I looked, two bubbles of the liquid's bead detached themselves from opposite sides of the glass and circled slowly to its center, where, instead of uniting, as bubbles in proximity usually do, they remained a little apart without further tendency to rotate.

Suddenly it came to me, with a sickening sensation, that they were not bubbles, but a pair of small, glittering eyes that now seemed regarding me from the depths of the beverage. For they sank as I looked; and then — horrors! — they enlarged to two great, frightful orbs that seemed to fasten my gaze with bands of fire. Slowly they began to circle about the bottom of the glass; then faster and faster they spun, until my brain reeled and my head felt like a humming top. At last, so rapidly they whirled, they seemed one bright wheel of baleful, glittering light, which, presently paling to a dull, sickly hued ring, swung slower and slower, finally fading away in the green-hued contents of the glass.

A simple matter to describe — but I had had quite enough. My ears were ringing; an iron band seemed drawn tightly about my head; a reddish mist impinged on my eyesight, and I felt the cold perspiration running from every pore.

I was about to press the neutral button, when I started back with a suppressed cry. In place of the arrow-headed pointer on the top of the box, there twisted and squirmed a hideous green and gray adder! The shock to my nervous system was something frightful; but even in the distraction of the moment, I realized it was not so much this one apparition of an adder that unnerved me, as it was the horrible dread of what might appear next.

With a powerful effort of my will, I reached a trembling hand to the cut-off button, and pressed it just in time to shut off a row of small wriggling vipers which the row of buttons on the side seemed simultaneously projecting.

“And that’s the effect of that plate with but the mild button set!” I mentally ejaculated, wiping the cold perspiration from

my face with my handkerchief, and glancing furtively about the room. As I did so, I caught the eyes of one of the seedy pair of toughs fixed on me with a queer, insolent look. My nerves were yet tingling from my recent experience. I felt irritable and ugly, and I returned his stare with interest.

"Look at de cully dude over dere, piping us off wid his kodak," said he to his chum.

"Say, Cholly," said that personage, turning about in his chair and holding up to me the sole of one of his big feet, "jess put de machine ter work on dat, and den git der picter framed ter mine me by, — see?"

I knew a word to the waiter would suffice to rid me of the pair. But it suddenly occurred to me that here was an opportunity to utilize the powers of the apparatus to some purpose. I would give these fellows a lesson they'd never forget to their dying day. The indicator of the dial was still set at "snakes." I had but to press the No. 1 button and call up the proper mental picture, to turn the full power of that terrible plate through the projector, which, as the box now stood, pointed at the wall on my left.

I had just attended to these preliminaries, when Cahill entered and walked down to them, evidently to order them out. But I was resolved not to let them off so easily. Hastily turning the projector, I lined them up just before he reached them.

The effect was instantaneous. With a yell, they both sprang to their feet. The next instant, one fell writhing to the floor, while the other came rushing towards the swing door, his face distorted and the foam flying from his mouth. As he neared me, he suddenly threw up his hands and fell across my table, striking the box, as he fell, with such force as to send it flying under the swing door out into the bar beyond.

The next moment pandemonium reigned!

As the box went rolling along, a chorus of agonized shrieks sounded through the room.

In falling it had swept the occupants of the place with its terrible current!

Indeed, it was only by a miracle of chance that I had not been caught in its radius as the box rolled.

In an instant the room was one struggling mass of delirious humanity. Some rolled on the floor in frightful convulsions, — others, in their frenzy, grappled together and tore at each others' throats like wild beasts!

I sat for a moment paralyzed with horror. Then I realized that in my attempt at a joke I had brought upon at least a dozen respectable citizens delirium tremens in their most horrible form! This brought me to my senses. The box must be recovered at all hazards and its fearful effects neutralized! I sprang to my feet and leaped through the swing door.

The box was nowhere in sight!

A waiter, white with fright, was clinging to the door-post of the street entrance, shouting for the police.

"The box! where's the box?" I cried.

"He's — he's got it, sir!" said he in a frightened stutter.

"Got it! who's got it?"

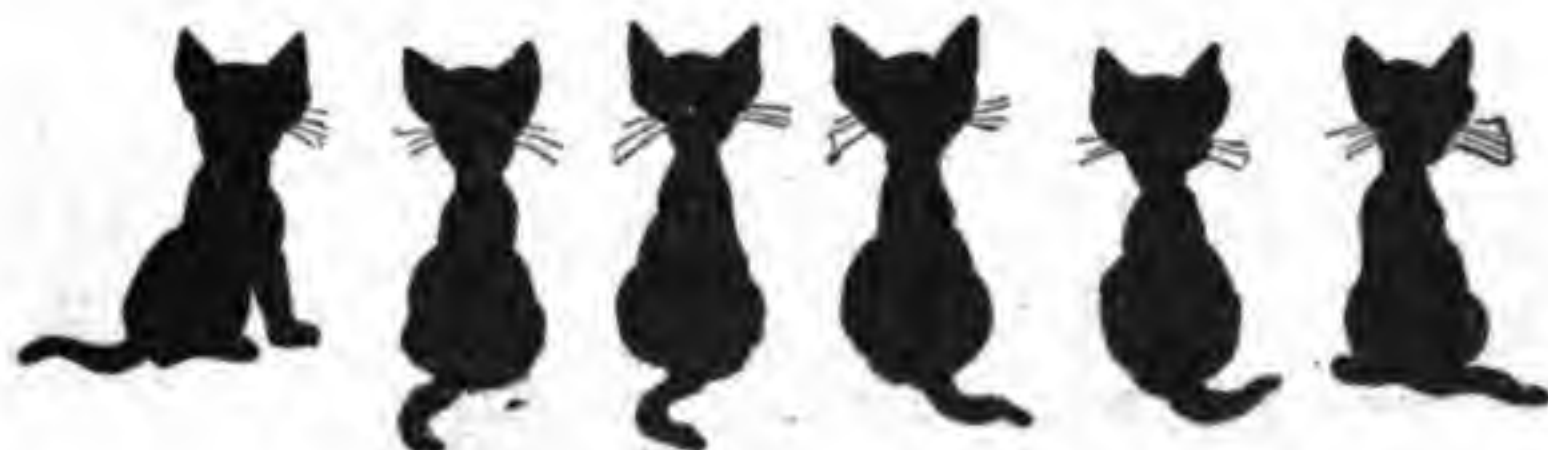
"Why, just as it rolled against the bar, in came the crank that brought it here. Grabbing it, he pressed one of the buttons, and then, 'Great heavens!' he yelled, 'the fool has broken the neutralizer. I can shut off the current but not the effects!' and with that he clapped it under his coat and rushed out."

My predicament was a desperate one!

The stranger undoubtedly would seek, by flight, to evade all responsibility for the frightful consequences of my folly.

He must be found at all costs!

Appalled at the frightful position in which I had placed myself, I rushed into the street in wild pursuit. But my efforts were vain. And since then, though I have exhausted every expedient in my despairing search, not the slightest trace has been found of the mysterious inventor — "the man with the box."



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The Mysterious Card Unveiled.

BY CLEVELAND MOFFETT.



NO physician was ever more scrupulous than I have been, during my thirty years of practice, in observing the code of professional secrecy; and it is only for grave reasons, partly in the interests of medical science, largely as a warning to intelligent people, that I place upon record the following statements.

One morning a gentleman called at my offices to consult me about some nervous trouble. From the moment I saw him, the man made a deep impression on me, not so much by the pallor and worn look of his face as by a certain intense sadness in his eyes, as if all hope had gone out of his life. I wrote a prescription for him, and advised him to try the benefits of an ocean voyage. He seemed to shiver at the idea, and said that he had been abroad too much, already.

As he handed me my fee, my eye fell upon the palm of his hand, and I saw there, plainly marked on the Mount of Saturn, a cross surrounded by two circles. I should explain that for the greater part of my life I have been a constant and enthusiastic student of palmistry. During my travels in the Orient, after taking my degree, I spent months studying this fascinating art at the best sources of information in the world. I have read every-

thing published on palmistry in every known language, and my library on the subject is perhaps the most complete in existence. In my time I have examined at least fourteen thousand palms, and taken casts of many of the more interesting of them. But I had never seen such a palm as this; at least, never but once, and the horror of the case was so great that I shudder even now when I call it to mind.

"Pardon me," I said, keeping the patient's hand in mine, "would you let me look at your palm?"

I tried to speak indifferently, as if the matter were of small consequence, and for some moments I bent over the hand in silence. Then, taking a magnifying glass from my desk, I looked at it still more closely. I was not mistaken; here was indeed the sinister double circle on Saturn's mount, with the cross inside,—a marking so rare as to portend some stupendous destiny of good or evil, more probably the latter.

I saw that the man was uneasy under my scrutiny, and, presently, with some hesitation, as if mustering courage, he asked: "Is there anything remarkable about my hand?"

"Yes," I said, "there is. Tell me, did not something very unusual, something very horrible, happen to you about ten or eleven years ago?"

I saw by the way the man started that I had struck near the mark, and, studying the stream of fine lines that crossed his life-line from the mount of Venus, I added: "Were you not in some foreign country at that time?"

The man's face blanched, but he only looked at me steadily out of those mournful eyes. Now I took his other hand, and compared the two, line by line, mount by mount, noting the short square fingers, the heavy thumb, with amazing will-power in its upper joint, and gazing again and again at that ominous sign on Saturn.

"Your life has been strangely unhappy, your years have been clouded by some evil influence."

"My God," he said weakly, sinking into a chair, "how can you know these things?"

"It is easy to know what one sees," I said, and tried to draw him out about his past, but the words seemed to stick in his throat.

"I will come back and talk to you again," he said, and he went away without giving me his name or any revelation of his life.

Several times he called during subsequent weeks, and gradually seemed to take on a measure of confidence in my presence. He would talk freely of his physical condition, which seemed to cause him much anxiety. He even insisted upon my making the most careful examination of all his organs, especially of his eyes, which, he said, had troubled him at various times. Upon making the usual tests, I found that he was suffering from a most uncommon form of color blindness, that seemed to vary in its manifestations, and to be connected with certain hallucinations or abnormal mental states which recurred periodically, and about which I had great difficulty in persuading him to speak. At each visit I took occasion to study his hand anew, and each reading of the palm gave me stronger conviction that here was a life mystery that would abundantly repay any pains taken in unravelling it.

While I was in this state of mind, consumed with a desire to know more of my unhappy acquaintance and yet not daring to press him with questions, there came a tragic happening that revealed to me with startling suddenness the secret I was bent on knowing. One night, very late,—in fact it was about four o'clock in the morning,—I received an urgent summons to the bedside of a man who had been shot. As I bent over him I saw that it was my friend, and for the first time I realized that he was a man of wealth and position, for he lived in a beautifully furnished house filled with art treasures and looked after by a retinue of servants. From one of these I learned that he was Richard Burwell, one of New York's most respected citizens—in fact, one of her best-known philanthropists, a man who for years had devoted his life and fortune to good works among the poor.

But what most excited my surprise was the presence in the house of two officers, who informed me that Mr. Burwell was under arrest, charged with murder. The officers assured me that it was only out of deference to his well-known standing in the community that the prisoner had been allowed the privilege of receiving medical treatment in his own home; their orders were peremptory to keep him under close surveillance.

Giving no time to further questionings, I at once proceeded to

examine the injured man, and found that he was suffering from a bullet wound in the back at about the height of the fifth rib. On probing for the bullet, I found that it had lodged near the heart, and decided that it would be exceedingly dangerous to try to remove it immediately. So I contented myself with administering a sleeping potion.

As soon as I was free to leave Burwell's bedside I returned to the officers and obtained from them details of what had happened. A woman's body had been found a few hours before, shockingly mutilated, on Water Street, one of the dark ways in the swarming region along the river front. It had been found at about two o'clock in the morning by some printers from the office of the *Courier des Etats Unis*, who, in coming from their work, had heard cries of distress and hurried to the rescue. As they drew near they saw a man spring away from something huddled on the sidewalk, and plunge into the shadows of the night, running from them at full speed.

Suspecting at once, that here was the mysterious assassin so long vainly sought for many similar crimes, they dashed after the fleeing man, who darted right and left through the maze of dark streets, giving out little cries like a squirrel as he ran. Seeing that they were losing ground, one of the printers fired at the fleeing shadow, his shot being followed by a scream of pain, and hurrying up they found a man writhing on the ground. The man was Richard Burwell.

The news that my sad-faced friend had been implicated in such a revolting occurrence shocked me inexpressibly, and I was greatly relieved the next day to learn from the papers that a most unfortunate mistake had been made. The evidence given before the coroner's jury was such as to abundantly exonerate Burwell from all shadow of guilt. The man's own testimony, taken at his bedside, was in itself almost conclusive in his favor. When asked to explain his presence so late at night in such a part of the city, Burwell stated that he had spent the evening at the Florence Mission, where he had made an address to some unfortunates gathered there, and that later he had gone with a young missionary worker to visit a woman living on Frankfort Street, who was dying of consumption. This statement was borne out

by the missionary worker himself, who testified that Burwell had been most tender in his ministrations to the poor woman and had not left her until death had relieved her sufferings.

Another point which made it plain that the printers had mistaken their man in the darkness, was the statement made by all of them that, as they came running up, they had overheard some words spoken by the murderer, and that these words were in their own language, French. Now it was shown conclusively that Burwell did not know the French language, that indeed he had not even an elementary knowledge of it.

Another point in his favor was a discovery made at the spot where the body was found. Some profane and ribald words, also in French, had been scrawled in chalk on the door and doorsill, being in the nature of a coarse defiance to the police to find the assassin, and experts in handwriting who were called testified unanimously that Burwell, who wrote a refined, scholarly hand, could never have formed those misshapen words.

Furthermore, at the time of his arrest no evidence was found on the clothes or person of Burwell, nothing in the nature of bruises or bloodstains that would tend to implicate him in the crime. The outcome of the matter was that he was honorably discharged by the coroner's jury, who were unanimous in declaring him innocent, and who brought in a verdict that the unfortunate woman had come to her death at the hand of some person or persons unknown.

On visiting my patient late on the afternoon of the second day I saw that his case was very grave, and I at once instructed the nurses and attendants to prepare for an operation. The man's life depended upon my being able to extract the bullet, and the chance of doing this was very small. Mr. Burwell realized that his condition was critical, and, beckoning me to him, told me that he wished to make a statement he felt might be his last. He spoke with agitation which was increased by an unforeseen happening. For just then a servant entered the room and whispered to me that there was a gentleman downstairs who insisted upon seeing me, and who urged business of great importance. This message the sick man overheard, and lifting himself with an effort, he said excitedly : " Tell me, is he a tall man with glasses ? "

The servant hesitated.

"I knew it; you cannot deceive me; that man will haunt me to my grave. Send him away, doctor; I beg of you not to see him."

Humoring my patient, I sent word to the stranger that I could not see him, but, in an undertone, instructed the servant to say that the man might call at my office the next morning. Then, turning to Burwell, I begged him to compose himself and save his strength for the ordeal awaiting him.

"No, no," he said, "I need my strength now to tell you what you must know to find the truth. You are the only man who has understood that there has been some terrible influence at work in my life. You are the only man competent to study out what that influence is, and I have made provision in my will that you shall do so after I am gone. I know that you will heed my wishes?"

The intense sadness of his eyes made my heart sink; I could only grip his hand and remain silent.

"Thank you; I was sure I might count on your devotion. Now, tell me, doctor, you have examined me carefully, have you not?"

I nodded.

"In every way known to medical science?"

I nodded again.

"And have you found anything wrong with me, — I mean, besides this bullet, anything abnormal?"

"As I have told you, your eyesight is defective; I should like to examine your eyes more thoroughly when you are better."

"I shall never be better; besides it isn't my eyes; I mean myself, my soul, — you haven't found anything wrong there?"

"Certainly not; the whole city knows the beauty of your character and your life."

"Tut, tut; the city knows nothing. For ten years I have lived so much with the poor that people have almost forgotten my previous active life when I was busy with money-making and happy in my home. But there is a man out West, whose head is white and whose heart is heavy, who has not forgotten, and there is a woman in London, a silent, lonely woman, who has not forgotten.

The man was my partner, poor Jack Evelyn; the woman was my wife. How can a man be so cursed, doctor, that his love and friendship bring only misery to those who share it? How can it be that one who has in his heart only good thoughts can be constantly under the shadow of evil? This charge of murder is only one of several cases in my life where, through no fault of mine, the shadow of guilt has been cast upon me.

“Years ago, when my wife and I were perfectly happy, a child was born to us, and a few months later, when it was only a tender, helpless little thing that its mother loved with all her heart, it was strangled in its cradle, and we never knew who strangled it, for the deed was done one night when there was absolutely no one in the house but my wife and myself. There was no doubt about the crime, for there on the tiny neck were the finger marks where some cruel hand had closed until life went.

“Then a few years later, when my partner and I were on the eve of fortune, our advance was set back by the robbery of our safe. Some one opened it in the night, some one who knew the combination, for it was the work of no burglar, and yet there were only two persons in the world who knew that combination, my partner and myself. I tried to be brave when these things happened, but as my life went on it seemed more and more as if some curse were on me.

“Eleven years ago I went abroad with my wife and daughter. Business took me to Paris, and I left the ladies in London, expecting to have them join me in a few days. But they never did join me, for the curse was on me still, and before I had been forty-eight hours in the French capital something happened that completed the wreck of my life. It doesn't seem possible, does it, that a simple white card with some words scrawled on it in purple ink could effect a man's undoing? And yet that was my fate. The card was given me by a beautiful woman with eyes like stars. She is dead long ago, and why she wished to harm me I never knew. You must find that out.

“You see I did not know the language of the country, and, wishing to have the words translated, — surely that was natural enough, — I showed the card to others. But no one would tell me what it meant. And, worse than that, wherever I showed it,

and to whatever person, there evil came upon me quickly. I was driven from one hotel after another; an old acquaintance turned his back on me; I was arrested and thrown into prison; I was ordered to leave the country."

The sick man paused for a moment in his weakness, but with an effort forced himself to continue: —

"When I went back to London, sure of comfort in the love of my wife, she too, on seeing the card, drove me from her with cruel words. And when finally, in deepest despair, I returned to New York, dear old Jack, the friend of a lifetime, broke with me when I showed him what was written. What the words were I do not know, and suppose no one will ever know, for the ink has faded these many years. You will find the card in my safe with other papers. But I want you, when I am gone, to find out the mystery of my life; and — and — about my fortune, that must be held until you have decided. There is no one who needs my money as much as the poor in this city, and I have bequeathed it to them unless —"

In an agony of mind, Mr. Burwell struggled to go on, I soothing and encouraging him.

"Unless you find what I am afraid to think, but — but — yes, I must say it, — that I have not been a good man, as the world thinks, but have — O doctor, if you find that I have unknowingly harmed any human being, I want that person, or these persons to have my fortune. Promise that."

Seeing the wild light in Burwell's eyes, and the fever that was burning him, I gave the promise asked of me, and the sick man sank back calmer.

A little later, the nurse and attendants came for the operation. As they were about to administer the ether, Burwell pushed them from him, and insisted on having brought to his bedside an iron box from the safe.

"The card is here," he said, laying his trembling hand upon the box, "you will remember your promise!"

Those were his last words, for he did not survive the operation.

Early the next morning I received this message: "The stranger of yesterday begs to see you;" and presently a gentleman of fine

presence and strength of face, a tall, dark-complexioned man wearing glasses, was shown into the room.

"Mr. Burwell is dead, is he not?" were his first words.

"Who told you?"

"No one told me, but I know it, and I thank God for it."

There was something in the stranger's intense earnestness that convinced me of his right to speak thus, and I listened attentively.

"That you may have confidence in the statement I am about to make, I will first tell you who I am;" and he handed me a card that caused me to lift my eyes in wonder, for it bore a very great name, that of one of Europe's most famous savants.

"You have done me much honor, sir," I said with respectful inclination.

"On the contrary you will oblige me by considering me in your debt, and by never revealing my connection with this wretched man. I am moved to speak partly from considerations of human justice, largely in the interest of medical science. It is right for me to tell you, doctor, that your patient was beyond question the Water Street assassin."

"Impossible!" I cried.

"You will not say so when I have finished my story, which takes me back to Paris, to the time, eleven years ago, when this man was making his first visit to the French capital."

"The mysterious card!" I exclaimed.

"Ah, he has told you of his experience, but not of what befell the night before, when he first met my sister."

"Your sister?"

"Yes, it was she who gave him the card, and, in trying to befriend him, made him suffer. She was in ill health at the time, so much so that we had left our native India for extended journeyings. Alas! we delayed too long, for my sister died in New York, only a few weeks later, and I honestly believe her taking off was hastened by anxiety inspired by this man."

"Strange," I murmured, "how the life of a simple New York merchant could become entangled with that of a great lady of the East."

"Yet so it was. You must know that my sister's condition

was due mainly to an over fondness for certain occult investigations, from which I had vainly tried to dissuade her. She had once befriended some adepts, who, in return, had taught her things about the souls he had better have left unlearned. At various times while with her I had seen strange things happen, but I never realized what unearthly powers were in her until that night in Paris. We were returning from a drive in the Bois; it was about ten o'clock, and the city lay beautiful around us as Paris looks on a perfect summer's night. Suddenly my sister gave a cry of pain and put her hand to her heart. Then, changing from French to the language of our country, she explained to me quickly that something frightful was taking place there, where she pointed her finger across the river, that we must go to the place at once — the driver must lash his horses — every second was precious.

"So affected was I by her intense conviction, and such confidence had I in my sister's wisdom, that I did not oppose her, but told the man to drive as she directed. The carriage fairly flew across the bridge, down the Boulevard St. Germain, then to the left, threading its way through the narrow streets that lie along the Seine. This way and that, straight ahead here, a turn there, she directing our course, never hesitating, as if drawn by some unseen power, and always urging the driver on to greater speed. Finally, we came to a black-mouthed, evil-looking alley, so narrow and roughly paved that the carriage could scarcely advance.

"'Come on!' my sister cried, springing to the ground; 'we will go on foot, we are nearly there. Thank God, we may yet be in time.'

"No one was in sight as we hurried along the dark alley, and scarcely a light was visible, but presently a smothered scream broke the silence, and, touching my arm, my sister exclaimed: —

"'There, draw your weapon, quick, and take the man at any cost!'

"So swiftly did everything happen after that that I hardly know my actions, but a few minutes later I held pinioned in my arms a man whose blows and writhings had been all in vain; for you must know that much exercise in the jungle had made me strong of limb. As soon as I had made the fellow fast I looked

down and found moaning on the ground a poor woman, who explained with tears and broken words that the man had been in the very act of strangling her. Searching him I found a long-bladed knife of curious shape, and keen as a razor, which had been brought for what horrible purpose you may perhaps divine.

"Imagine my surprise, on dragging the man back to the carriage to find, instead of the ruffianly assassin I expected, a gentleman as far as could be judged from face and manner. Fine eyes, white hands, careful speech, all the signs of refinement, and the dress of a man of means.

"How can this be?" I said to my sister in our own tongue as we drove away, I holding my prisoner on the opposite seat where he sat silent.

"'It is a *kulos*-man,' she said, shivering, 'it is a fiend-soul. There are a few such in the whole world, perhaps two or three in all.'

"But he has a good face."

"'You have not seen his real face yet; I will show it to you, presently.'

"In the strangeness of these happenings and the still greater strangeness of my sister's words, I had all but lost the power of wonder. So we sat without further word until the carriage stopped at the little chateau we had taken near the Parc Monteau.

"I could never properly describe what happened that night; my knowledge of these things is too limited. I simply obeyed my sister in all that she directed, and kept my eyes on this man as no hawk ever watched its prey. She began by questioning him, speaking in a kindly tone which I could ill understand. He seemed embarrassed, dazed, and professed to have no knowledge of what had occurred, or how he had come where we found him. To all my inquiries as to the woman or the crime he shook his head blankly, and thus aroused my wrath.

"'Be not angry with him, brother; he is not lying, it is the other soul.'

"She asked him about his name and country, and he replied without hesitation that he was Richard Burwell, a merchant from New York, just arrived in Paris, traveling for pleasure in Europe

with his wife and daughter. This seemed reasonable, for the man spoke English, and, strangely enough, seemed to have no knowledge of French, although we both remembered hearing him speak French to the woman.

“ ‘There is no doubt,’ my sister said, ‘It is indeed a *kulos*-man; It knows that I am here, that I am Its master. Look, look!’ she cried sharply, at the same time putting her eyes so close to the man’s face that their fierce light seemed to burn into him. What power she exercised I do not know, nor whether some words she spoke, unintelligible to me, had to do with what followed, but instantly there came over this man, this pleasant-looking, respectable American citizen, such a change as is not made by death worms gnawing in a grave. Now there was a fiend grovelling at her feet, a foul, sin-stained fiend.

“ ‘Now you see the demon-soul,’ said my sister. ‘Watch It writhe and struggle; it has served me well, brother, sayest thou not so, the lore I gained from our wise men?’

“The horror of what followed chilled my blood; nor would I trust my memory were it not that there remained and still remains plain proof of all that I affirm. This hideous creature, dwarfed, crouching, devoid of all resemblance to the man we had but now beheld, chattering to us in curious old-time French, poured out such horrid blasphemy as would have blanched the cheek of Satan, and made recital of such evil deeds as never mortal ear gave heed to. And as she willed my sister checked It or allowed It to go on. What it all meant was more than I could tell. To me it seemed as if these tales of wickedness had no connection with our modern life, or with the world around us, and so I judged presently from what my sister said.

“ ‘Speak of the later time, since thou wast in this clay.’

“Then I perceived that the creature came to things of which I knew: It spoke of New York, of a wife, a child, a friend. It told of strangling the child, of robbing the friend; and was going on to tell God knows what other horrid deeds when my sister stopped It.

“ ‘Stand as thou didst in killing the little babe, stand, stand!’ and once more she spoke some words unknown to me. Instantly the demon sprang forward, and, bending Its clawlike hands,

clutched them around some little throat that was not there, — but I could see it in my mind. And the look on its face was a blackest glimpse of hell.

“ ‘ And now stand as thou didst in robbing the friend, stand, stand ; ’ and again came the unknown words, and again the fiend obeyed.

“ ‘ These we will take for future use,’ said my sister. And bidding me watch the creature carefully until she should return, she left the room, and, after none too short an absence, returned bearing a black box that was an apparatus for photography, and something more besides, — some newer, stranger kind of photography that she had learned. Then, on a strangely fashioned card, a transparent white card, composed of many layers of finest Oriental paper, she took the pictures of the creature in those two creeping poses. And when it all was done, the card seemed as white as before, and empty of all meaning until one held it up and examined it intently. Then the pictures showed. And between the two there was a third picture, which somehow seemed to show, at the same time, two faces in one, two souls, my sister said, the kindly visaged man we first had seen, and then the fiend.

“ Now my sister asked for pen and ink and I gave her my pocket pen which was filled with purple ink. Handing this to the *kulos*-man she bade him write under the first picture : ‘ Thus I killed my babe.’ And under the second picture : ‘ Thus I robbed my friend.’ And under the third, the one that was between the other two : ‘ This is the soul of Richard Burwell.’ An odd thing about this writing was that it was in the same old French the creature had used in speech, and yet Burwell knew no French.

“ My sister was about to finish with the creature when a new idea took her, and she said, looking at It as before : — ‘ Of all thy crimes which one is the worst ? Speak, I command thee ! ’

“ Then the fiend told how once It had killed every soul in a house of holy women and buried the bodies in a cellar under a heavy door.

“ ‘ Where was the house ? ’

“ ‘ At No. 19 Rue Picpus, next to the old graveyard.’

“ ‘ And when was this ? ’

"Here the fiend seemed to break into fierce rebellion, writhing on the floor with hideous contortions, and pouring forth words that meant nothing to me, but seemed to reach my sister's understanding, for she interrupted from time to time, with quick, stern words that finally brought It to subjection.

" 'Enough,' she said, 'I know all,' and then she spoke some words again, her eyes fixed as before, and the reverse change came. Before us stood once more the honest-looking, fine-appearing gentleman, Richard Burwell, of New York.

" 'Excuse me, madame,' he said, awkwardly, but with deference; 'I must have dozed a little. I am not myself to-night.'

" 'No,' said my sister, 'you have not been yourself to-night.'

"A little later I accompanied the man to the Continental Hotel, where he was stopping, and, returning to my sister, I talked with her until late into the night. I was alarmed to see that she was wrought to a nervous tension that argued ill for her health. I urged her to sleep, but she would not.

" 'No,' she said, 'think of the awful responsibility that rests upon me.' And then she went on with her strange theories and explanations, of which I understood only that here was a power for evil more terrible than a pestilence, menacing all humanity.

" 'Once in many cycles it happens,' she said, 'that a *kulos-soul* pushes itself within the body of a new-born child, when the pure soul waiting to enter is delayed. Then the two live together through that life, and this hideous principle of evil has a chance upon the earth. It is my will, as I feel it my duty, to see this poor man again. The chances are that he will never know us, for the shock of this night to his normal soul is so great as to wipe out memory.'

"The next evening about the same hour, my sister insisted that I should go with her to the *Folies Bergère*, a concert garden, none too well frequented, and when I remonstrated, she said: 'I must go,— It is there,' and the words sent a shiver through me.

"We drove to this place, and passing into the garden, presently discovered Richard Burwell seated at a little table, enjoying the scene of pleasure, which was plainly new to him. My sister hesitated a moment what to do, and then, leaving my arm, she advanced to the table and dropped before Burwell's eyes the card

she had prepared. A moment later, with a look of pity on her beautiful face, she rejoined me and we went away. It was plain he did not know us."

To so much of the savant's strange recital I had listened with absorbed interest, though without a word, but now I burst in with questions.

"What was your sister's idea in giving Burwell the card?" I asked.

"It was in the hope that she might make the man understand his terrible condition, that is, teach the pure soul to know its loathsome companion."

"And did her effort succeed?"

"Alas! it did not; my sister's purpose was defeated by the man's inability to see the pictures that were plain to every other eye. It is impossible for the *kulos*-man to know his own degradation."

"And yet this man has for years been leading a most exemplary life?"

My visitor shook his head. "I grant you there has been improvement, due largely to experiments I have conducted upon him according to my sister's wishes. But the fiend soul was never driven out. It grieves me to tell you, doctor, that not only was this man the Water Street assassin, but he was the mysterious murderer, the long-sought-for mutilator of women, whose red crimes have baffled the police of Europe and America for the past ten years."

"You know this," said I, starting up, "and yet did not denounce him?"

"It would have been impossible to prove such a charge, and besides, I had made oath to my sister that I would use the man only for these soul-experiments. What are his crimes compared with the great secret of knowledge I am now able to give the world?"

"A secret of knowledge?"

"Yes," said the savant, with intense earnestness, "I may tell you now, doctor, what the whole world will know, ere long, that it is possible to compel every living person to reveal the innermost secrets of his or her life, so long as memory remains, for

memory is only the power of producing in the brain material pictures that may be projected externally by the thought rays and made to impress themselves upon the photographic plate, precisely as ordinary pictures do."

"You mean," I exclaimed, "that you can photograph the two principles of good and evil that exist in us?"

"Exactly that. The great truth of a dual soul existence, that was dimly apprehended by one of your Western novelists, has been demonstrated by me in the laboratory with my camera. It is my purpose, at the proper time, to entrust this precious knowledge to a chosen few who will perpetuate it and use it worthily."

"Wonderful, wonderful!" I cried, "and now tell me, if you will, about the house on the Rue Picpus. Did you ever visit the place?"

"We did, and found that no buildings had stood there for fifty years, so we did not pursue the search." *

"And the writing on the card, have you any memory of it, for Burwell told me that the words have faded?"

"I have something better than that; I have a photograph of both card and writing, which my sister was careful to take. I had a notion that the ink in my pocket pen would fade, for it was a poor affair. This photograph I will bring you to-morrow."

"Bring it to Burwell's house," I said.

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The next morning the stranger called as agreed upon.

"Here is the photograph of the card," he said.

"And here is the original card," I answered, breaking the seal of the envelope I had taken from Burwell's iron box. "I have waited for your arrival to look at it. Yes, the writing has indeed vanished; the card seems quite blank."

"Not when you hold it this way," said the stranger, and as he

* Years later, some workmen in Paris, making excavations in the Rue Picpus, came upon a heavy door buried under a mass of debris, under an old cemetery. On lifting the door they found a vault-like chamber in which were a number of female skeletons, and graven on the walls were blasphemous words written in French, which experts declared dated from fully two hundred years before. They also declared this handwriting identical with that found on the door at the Water Street murder in New York. Thus we may deduce a theory of fiend reincarnation; for it would seem clear, almost to the point of demonstration, that this murder of the seventeenth century was the work of the same evil soul that killed the poor woman on Water Street towards the end of the nineteenth century.

tipped the card I saw such a horrid revelation as I can never forget. In an instant I realized how the shock of seeing that card had been too great for the soul of wife or friend to bear. In these pictures was the secret of a cursed life. The resemblance to Burwell was unmistakable, the proof against him was overwhelming. In looking upon that piece of pasteboard the wife had seen a crime which the mother could never forgive, the partner had seen a crime which the friend could never forgive. Think of a loved face suddenly melting before your eyes into a grinning skull, then into a mass of putrefaction, then into the ugliest fiend of hell, leering at you, distorted with all the marks of vice and shame. That is what I saw, that is what they had seen!

“Let us lay these two cards in the coffin,” said my companion impressively, “we have done what we could.”

Eager to be rid of the hateful piece of pasteboard (for who could say that the curse was not still clinging about it?), I took the strange man's arm, and together we advanced into the adjoining room where the body lay. I had seen Burwell as he breathed his last, and knew that there had been a peaceful look on his face as he died. But now, as we laid the two white cards on the still breast, the savant suddenly touched my arm, and pointing to the dead man's face, now frightfully distorted, whispered: — “See, even in death It followed him. Let us close the coffin quickly.”



The Guardian of Mystery Island.

BY DR. EDMOND NOLCINI.



ON the white slope of the sandy beach at Orr, a company of fishermen, just in from the night's catch, were variously employed in loading, disposing of their traps, or mending their nets. There were two quiet figures in the picture outlined in the clear summer atmosphere between the shore and the sea. A young man, who marked three points ahead in the line of intellectual development, was standing beside an overturned boat, upon which was seated an old fisherman, engaged in mending his net, and conveying to the attentive ear of his companion some interesting bits of information concerning the surrounding islands of the bay. There were relative values an artist would have appreciated, afforded by the contrast in dress and person of the two men. The fair, sensitive face of the young man, with his lithe and elegant figure coolly clad in white flannel, was a complement to the burly form of the sailor, roughly clothed, and with weather-stained features composing a simple but kindly countenance, well shaded under an oilskin hat.

"No land twixt her en Spain, sir."

"A period between continents," interrupted the young man jocosely.

"En I wouldn't go anighst her fur all the gold en the mint. Thar's plenty of land twixt her en us, thank God! Ye ken see she's the furtherest out nor all the islands."

"Yes, I see, Tom," replied the young man, directing a quizzical glance toward a small dark spot between the two spaces of blue. "She must be ten miles out."

"Nigh onter it."

"Well, what is out there to prevent a man from visiting your 'Mystery Island,' if he wants to?"

"Fur one thing, sir, Kidd's gold ez buried out thar, but thar

hain't a feller on this yer coast dar's to go anighst it. Cauz the cove, what's only a narrer cut twixt two cliffs thet crawls inter serpent ledges under the warter, makes it a damned nasty place ter git inter, even ef it warn't guarded —"

"Guarded? Guarded by whom?"

"A dorg, a confounded sperret dorg, with eyes like lighthouse lanterns, thet kin be seed ten miles out, whenever anything is goin' ter harpen. Whoever sees thet ar dorg might just's well make peace with God, fer he hain't likely ter stay round much longer 'mong men."

The young man, whose name was Lenartson, — Sam Lenartson, — laughed outright. It seemed the most ridiculous story he had ever heard credited by otherwise sensible men.

He determined at once to administer a rebuke to their foolish superstitions.

"Tom," he said, wheeling about impulsively, "give me a dory and a pair of oars, and I will go out there to-day and explode all your thrilling romance about the island."

"My God, sir!" Tom dropped his horny hands helplessly, an ashy pallor creeping over his face.

"Yer don't know, sir. Twenty years ago, sir, there was a party of young chaps from the city, who wouldn't hear to nuthin', went out there en never come back. Ye hain't lived round these parts en watched the signs. Thar's the awfulest rocket strikes this yer coast en a hurricane every time thet unarthly beast ez seed. 'Twould be like a helpin' ye to commit suicide; et's damned folly ter think uv et."

"Tom, you might just as well let me have your boat as to put me to the trouble of getting another, as I shall certainly go out to Mystery Island, and I should like to go this morning. I vow solemnly to break the awful spell which has power over you only from your belief in it. And when I have entered the cove, braved the dog, and upset the kingdom of the devil supposed to be established there, not one of you fellows will dispute my right to Kidd's gold."

Tom's revolutions of thought were too slow to frame a new objection. Hypnotized by the spirit and energy of his companion, he rose from his seat, pointing doggedly at the boat.

"Ef ye will, ye will, I spoze; take her en go; ye don't go unwarned.

"Ye ken look out fur a squall," he shouted after the departing youth, who flung up his hat like a person taking leave of a party of particular friends, as he paddled out.

Sam was not by nature over-cautious, so that the admonition regarding the weather gave him no concern of mind as he floated past the beautiful islands of Casco Bay. One after another they disappeared behind him, as the island for which his oars were bent loomed up more definitely before him. Suddenly, conscious of a chill penetrating the atmosphere, he looked up, to remark a marshaling force of clouds that, unperceived by him, had been marching up the heavenly plain for the last half hour, and were now rapidly darkening with a summer shower.

An ominous lash of the wind struck the bosom of the great deep. With a startled throb, it lifted the boat sharply. Sam looked around him with critical and troubled eyes.

He was not far from the little cove, which presented itself as a sharply inclined sand-bar displayed between the cliffs that rose precipitously upon either side of it.

But the ledges upon either side of the passage rendered it so narrow and dangerous that they were called the Black Snakes. Around them the seething tide boiled like a witch's pot, flinging the white foam of the angry billows high against the cliffs, that returned it with such force that a boat carried in this direction must have been doomed to certain destruction.

Just as Lenartson was about to breast the wave which should have carried him safely into the little harbor, a fierce gust of wind from an unexpected quarter seized upon his light craft, and before he could make an effort to resist it, he was whirled about broad-side upon one of the rising breakers. In this position, half cap-sized and water logged, blinded by the falling rain, his face wet by the salt spray, he must have been borne to certain death had not the capricious wind, playing with the frail craft like a paper toy, suddenly reversed it. Thus it was set upon the crest of a falling breaker in such a direction as to be flung into the cove, landing with a sharp collision some twenty feet up the beach.

The shock threw Lenartson face forward, where he lay for a

moment half stunned. Then, as a flash of light and crash of thunder aroused him to a sense of danger, he sprang out of the boat, dragging it up the incline just in time to save it from the returning wave. After finding a broken stake, to which he secured his boat, he fled to the trees, seeking shelter from the rain among the tall and serried columns of pine and fir, whose thick mat of interlaced branches made the darkness almost impenetrable.

When, the shower ended, light through the breaking clouds penetrated the internal fastness, Lenartson discovered a rank growth of foliage not common to these islands nor the latitude in which they were located. Everywhere flowers and plants of variegated hues were massed in such rich profusion as to suggest the land of the deadly cobra, while even the more familiar trees had reached a height and breadth that seemed wholly foreign.

As he began to work his way through the thick undergrowth toward the interior, he came to the conclusion not only that the island was uninhabited, but that the place had not been marked by human footsteps for many years, as the small animals, and the birds that flew from cover, seemed quite fearless.

He had but just arrived at this conclusion when there rose upon the air the distinct bay of a dog, apparently not many feet away.

Evidently some one else had chosen the same day to pay a visit to the island.

Led by the sound of the animal's voice, he soon emerged upon what had been a small clearing, but at the present time was entirely covered with the second growth of trees, shooting up over an area of a hundred square feet. Here, amidst a medley of decayed stumps and underbrush, he saw a rude board hut, before which, with his nose in the air, sat the dog who had led him to question and investigation.

But, far from being the formidable creature of the fisherman's yarn, this noble wreck of the mastiff breed was ill fitted to hold midnight revels with hurricanes and to conjure with infernal powers, since every fiber of his poor old body seemed to call for a blanket and a kennel.

His eyes, instead of appearing the baleful globes of fire that fishermen's fancies had made visible ten miles out at sea, were rather dim and piteous in their appeal for friendly recognition.

The poor creature had somehow missed his master — or such was Sam's conclusions — and in dog anguish thus lamented his misfortune.

"Hullo, old boy! have you lost him? Well, never mind, we'll set that straight directly."

Having convinced himself by a glance into the interior of the cabin, which was filled with spiders' webs and their crafty weavers, that it had not been used for many years, Lenartson turned once more to the dog.

"Come, Jack," he said, "let us go after your master."

With one of those peremptory barks that is interpreted as dog consent, the great lion-like creature bounded into the thicket.

This action served to reveal what had at one time been a path, but now, like every other effort of man here, indicated a contention with, and partial subjection to, the native wildness of the woodland.

Through bramble and brier they pushed along the overgrown path, the dog still ahead, until a space of light suddenly penetrated the open branches of the trees. A moment later, they emerged upon a plot of ground, where was revealed to Lenartson's astonished gaze a stately old mansion, built of stone, and enclosed by neglected terraces and overgrown gardens, upon which, at some time, had been bestowed much expense and care.

Now, however, the sharp tooth of time had gnawed into the vitals of the old place, from the broken chimneys and sunken flags of the walks to the defaced and fallen fence, rotting away beneath the mold of the drifting leaves.

The deserted house conveyed an air of melancholy to all of its surroundings.

It seemed a little singular to the young man, as he came upon this scene, that no person at Orr had ever mentioned its builders and occupants to him.

"Why not?" he wondered.

The dog left him no time to consider this point at length. He bounded up the steps, ran across the stone veranda, and leaped through the wide door into the hall, at the entrance of which rose a flight of winding stone stairs.

As Lenartson made haste to follow him, he had time to notice

that the curtains at the lower windows were rendered almost invisible from the outside by the thick veil of dust encrusting the glass panes. He further felt the chill of a damp and moldy house while ascending the stairs.

The upper hall presented a tableau in still life of open doors, dusty floor, and cobwebbed corners. His steps seemed to evoke a ghostly ring of answering echoes through the vacant halls. As the dog passed through one of the open doors leading off at the right of the staircase, Lenartson paused upon the threshold to listen to the labored breathing of a sick or dying person.

Another moment, and his singular quest had brought him to the bedside of an old woman, lying beneath a heap of worn silk quilts and battered blankets, tossed about her emaciated figure in utmost confusion. The lips, thin, seamed, and crossed by yellow wrinkles, were parted above toothless gums in an almost vain struggle for breath. The talon-like fingers clutched nervously at the worn coverlid, as the great creature at Lenartson's side leaped upon the bed, lapping the withered cheek of his mistress ; then settled down, with his head upon his paws, and his eyes fixed in appeal upon the stranger.

In bewilderment Lenartson glanced about the room, to observe, here as elsewhere, the absence of care denoted in the carpet of dust upon the oak floor, the array of cobwebs festooning the ceiling or woven across the brocade shades depending in sags from the four large windows of the room.

Here was a mystery of Mystery Island that made his blood boil with indignation. An old woman ! Abandoned, it was evident, and dying thus, unattended except by a dog, her last earthly friend !

As he entered, she regarded him with no apparent recognition of a human presence, but turned the wandering glance of her wild, dark eyes toward a crucifix placed upon a table near the head of the bed. This crucifix was the only thing within reach of her vision to suggest solace to the dying, as there was neither bread upon the table to sustain her perishing frame, nor water to cool her parched lips.

"You are sick," affirmed the young man, with great pity vibrating in his voice ; " what can I do for you ? "

At the sound she sprang up in bed, and glared angrily upon him from dark and cavernous eyes. She stretched forth her long, lean arms, away from whose unlovely bones fell the tattered lace of her nightrobe.

"Pierre! Pierre!" she almost shrieked, as Lenartson shrank repulsed from the uninviting embrace. "At last! at last! Oh, my God, why did you leave me alone in this strange deserted land?"

She spoke in French, and Lenartson, understanding it well, thus discovered her lineage.

Then she had been deserted, this poor old creature, — a refugee from a sunny land, abandoned to a life of wretchedness on this forsaken isle.

"Madame," he interrupted in reverent sympathy, "I am not Pierre; I am a stranger, providentially brought to you in this hour of need. What can I give you, food or drink, and where can either be found?"

With a supreme effort she pulled herself forward, a movement that called his attention to the glittering rings that hung upon her yellow, shrivelled hands.

"Ah! you would deceive me, and to what purpose, I ask?"

She pointed in his face her old, skinny forefinger, an index of scorn shaken by wrath.

"Sir, I command you to leave me. If alone, well, so be it. If the King's head has fallen, it is a pretty piece of business these dogs have done. Never fear, the end will find France restored to reason. We shall make another King. No, sir! I decline your assistance in this matter. We are not a race of cowards."

As these scenes unshadowed themselves, she used first this tone of haughty complacency, and then, when the full horror of some fearful situation made itself felt, she threw up her arms with a cry of terror.

"What are they doing, these brutes in the street? It is she, my dear lady. Quick, give my cloak — this way — we must not be seen. The Bastille has fallen! It is the Conciergerie where they would carry our innocent, woe-white queen! It is dark, my dear, — give me your hand, — we are suspected, but we are also protected. Let us fly! The nobles are in the winepress, the

people are on top — blood flows, curses darken the air. This is not France, it is a pandemonium; it is a mad-house; it is hell!”

Through this hurried, breathless speech of terror, Lenartson stood as if rooted to the spot. At the close of it Madame sank, white with exhaustion, among the pillows. Then, as the dying candle fire flickered into a blaze, the old lips muttered: —

“Have mercy, my lord! Do not leave me with these rough fellows even for so short a time. Do you believe the weak hand of a woman can protect such immense treasure? The earth where it lies buried is but an open storehouse, when, by your absence, the lock is removed from silence, and that devil, cupidity, which I see in each man’s eye is free to manifest itself.

“Ah! the weed — the devil-weed! I had not thought about it. Plant it to-morrow upon yonder ledge that will lift it to the sun and air. Superstition will stay their greedy clutch for your gold, sir count. It will live, — like the evil in men’s hearts, it is too viperous to die.”

She tossed herself uneasily. Great drops of perspiration stood upon her forehead.

“Pierre! Pierre!” she moaned, “it is not a devil-weed, it is a soul bound and restless; it is my soul shrieking silent maledictions to heaven.

“Ah, sir count, it was an awkward slip to take a woman from palaces and thrones to a hut in the woods; from association with princes to a company of thieves. But the gold tempted you, my poor count. For the promise of a title under the new régime we plotted — a pirate sold to you the secret of hidden treasure. He had sailed with the great captain; he knew it was here. We were an odd assemblage, I vow, but the house was built by stealth, of material brought in the ship, — the treasure concealed. It was thought to be a secret, but when two have a secret it becomes public matter. Your devil-weed was planted to secure the gold. Your devil-weed — only a little evil, like the incipient causes of a revolution; the hand that cozened it into unholy life and nurtured its growth grew weak as the evil grew strong, to encompass the land. So, with the count’s devil-plant, the treasure was no longer protected; it was buried and consumed by that thing which he brought from India, — a little curling, crawling weed,

concealed in a golden box, a cousin to the breathing plant, but an apostate, a wretched outcast from the world of flowers, embodying all their passion of growth and reproduction, yet endowed with the cruel instincts and power of a viper."

What was she talking about? There seemed so little coherency in what she said.

From what he could patch together of this ragged information, it led him to suppose she was a refugee from the French Revolution, who had sought these shores in company with her son, or whoever Pierre or the count might have been; that in their flight they had fallen in with a company of buccaneers, who had piloted them to this spot, where now lay concealed beneath some monstrous growth their hidden treasure. But, hark! she spoke again, placing her hand on the dog's head.

"Ah, Rollin, is it you? You are more faithful than men. They left me alone here to die, — for I am dying,—but in death I will not lie in quiet amidst this savagery of nature.

"Would it be possible, if my body were bound to this accursed soil, that my spirit could abandon the scene of its torture? No! no! I should traverse the earth until the resurrection of the dead. Like yonder devil-plant, to which my feet have worn a path through the wilderness, I should writhe and creep and live, forever.

"Back to France! O souls of the dead! if ye have ears for mortal complaint, — if ye bear in your spirits a kinship and sympathy for human woe, I call upon you to witness the last cry of my embodied spirit for the land of its nativity: Bear me back to France!"

With a shriek of agony that made Lenartson's blood curdle, she threw her face, in the last desperate action of despair, forward upon her knees. Lay thus, with her features concealed, her arms stretched forth, and her hair straying loosely about her thin, white figure like a scant and shredded veil.

Lenartson, shocked and awakened from his trance, hastened to lift her so as to give her air. Too late! The candle had flickered out. She was dead.

Gravely he composed the old limbs and worn features of the Grand Madame. What a sad romance. How singular that he should have witnessed the closing scenes of such a tragedy!

Having done what was possible, he determined to return to Orr, to give information of what had happened. And if it was true that treasure was concealed on this island, the final cry of the departed soul should be answered. She should be carried back to France. First, however, he must solve the final mystery of the gold and the devil-plant.

After a short search he discovered what appeared to be an overgrown path, which led out of the garden toward the interior, directly opposite to the one by which he had entered, and began at once to make his way through it.

At length he arrived at an open space where, for half a mile, the trees were dwarfed at every point of the circle where they approached it. In the center of this enclosure of green earth, thus denuded of shrubs and trees, there was situated a long ledge, rising in some places to a height of thirty or forty feet. All about it the tall grass pliantly bent to the light touch of the wind. Covering the entire cliff, and often dripping to the ground along the face of it, was a peculiar mass, whose narrow, spiked leaves presented a living sea of green. The entire plant seemed to be endowed with voluntary motion, as without apparent cause it rose and fell like the jerky hunch of an inchworm, or the ceaseless motion of the waves of the sea.

Some of the limbs of the plant dropping over the head of the boulder were as large as the body of an anaconda. They were clothed in smooth, mottled bark somewhat resembling the skin of that reptile in color. The limbs and stems were set about with a glossy corolla of leaves, about four inches between each cluster. From their centers depended a bunch of tendril and a cluster of flame-like, star-shaped blossoms. Long, and dank, and dark, this beautiful devil-plant swung to and fro. At an interval of about ten seconds the limbs and tendrils contracted in such a manner as to bring all of the leaves together so as to entirely conceal the branches upon which they grew, then stretched forth again.

It was this singular motion, somewhat like that of the breathing plant, which caused the heaving, crawling motion of the whole mass above and the tremulous vibration of the limbs below.

Curiously fascinated, Lenartson crept somewhat nearer, hoping to determine something of the character of the plant's malign influence without perilous adventure.

As he approached nearer and nearer, fixing his eyes upon the plant with the suspicion of watching for an enemy in ambush, he kept pushing his foot cautiously through the long grass. "Was it here?" he speculated, "or over yonder, directly beneath that restless sea of leaves, the great treasure was buried?"

Suddenly he struck something concealed in the grass that leaped upon him, coiling with such a sharp, unexpected pressure about his feet and ankles, that, thus entangled, he was jerked from his feet, falling backward upon the earth. In this position, before he had time to struggle to his knees, he felt himself being rapidly drawn toward the cliff, upon which grew the great mass of the devil-plant, a limb of which, serpent-like, coiled and concealed in the grass, had caught his wary feet and was now rapidly coiling up his body, to bear him with angry jerks toward the great monster plant that, to Lenartson's horrified eyes, appeared to rise and approach him, full of malignant life. At that moment he remembered a fish knife which he happened to have in his pocket, and, seizing it, he commenced a desperate attack upon the vine as he struggled to his knees.

It was a short, sharply contested battle, in which the man realized that, once within the grasp of the great mass of deadly limbs and viperous tendrils of the great plant, there would be no more to-morrows for him upon the earth.

He succeeded none too soon in freeing himself from the obnoxious embrace of the fearful thing, whose wounded part continued by jerky hunches to retire toward the main body, trembling to receive it into its umbrageous bosom; while the severed portion about his legs, with a faint quiver as of departing life, uncoiled itself and dropped, with the soft thud of dead material, lengthwise upon the grass.

Filled with a great sense of gratitude and relief, not unmixed with horror, he made haste to beat a retreat toward the woodland, moving backward with his white face set suspiciously toward the enemy. When once assured that safe distance had been placed between them, he stood for some minutes watching the heaving

body of green with its serpent arms flung over the cliff. He was deeply impressed by Madame's characterization.

"It is not a plant! It is my soul shrieking maledictions to heaven."

What was it? He could not classify it as other than a rare specimen from a prehistoric period — a monstrous growth and prophecy in plant life of the mighty powers of intelligence destined to inherit and subdue the earth, significantly saved to this age for the study and wonder of man. In the unreckoned ages of its existence it had survived the sweep of universal conflagration; it had beheld the God-abandoned race perishing in the carburetted atmosphere, smothered in subterranean caverns, plunged in boiling oceans, or buried beneath mounds of burning cinders that followed the trail of the red serpent of the air. It had witnessed the age of darkness and cold, and now, a living chronicle of disaster, it had been captured by the daring hand of man and transplanted to a foreign shore.

It was five o'clock when Lenartson set out on his homeward journey. The sky was clear, the sea was calm, so that nothing occurred to withdraw his mind from meditating deeply upon ways and means by which the devil-plant might be overcome, the gold secured, and Madame's body returned to France.

He concluded that he would not speak to the people at Orr about the later portion of his adventure, as it would be likely to open inquiries that would lead to the discovery of the gold, — a secret that he did not wish at present to reveal to them.

Late as he arrived, for it was after sunset, he found Bill Maynard awaiting him. The old fisherman greeted him with surprise and emotion, and on hearing a portion of the story, hastened to bear the tidings from house to house. In consequence, Lenartson found himself an hour later besieged at the hotel by a crowd of curious people, to whom he rehearsed the tale of the finding of the dog, his pursuit to the deserted house, and the impressive death-bed scene of the Grand Madame.

The kerosene lamp upon the clerk's desk made a narrow circle of light around the room. In the center of it Lenartson occupied a wooden chair. He frequently changed his position as he talked.

Each strong-featured lad or bearded and weather-stained man

kept his face attentively set toward the narrator. Each sharply silhouetted ghost upon the white-plastered wall showed scarcely a tremor of the immobile figures that surrounded him. Lenartson represented all the action of the company at the center.

The young man being unpleasantly conscious of the profound impression made upon his own high-wrought sensibilities, attempted to assume an air of carelessness.

To cover a slight tremor of his limbs, which he could not wholly repress, he would push himself up on the back legs of his chair, and sit thus, with his hands in his pockets, talking almost waggishly. Then, almost irresistibly overcome by the intensity of his feelings, he would drop suddenly forward, with a tragic earnestness that made itself felt in every heart.

They comprehended at once how cruel superstition had made them to this poor old creature, the harrowing scenes of whose death-bed lost nothing by Lenartson's tragic recital, excepting her connection with the concealed gold, and the devil-plant.

Finally, they agreed that a company of twenty men should accompany Lenartson in the morning to Mystery Island, for the purpose of bringing Madame's body to Orr, where for a time, at least, it should remain, peacefully interred.

They did not separate until about one o'clock, and then, few of them who had listened to the story slept much for the night. As for Lenartson, he threw himself dressed upon the bed, from which he frequently started up to pace the floor.

All night he was haunted by the cry of Madame's departed spirit for the land of its nativity.

It lay upon him, a fearful injunction he could but obey. The devil-plant must in some way be overcome, the vast treasure unearthed, and Madame's embalmed body returned to the dear, sunny land of her birth.

As the yacht was launched, he moved among them, a strangely silent figure, with set lips and pallid cheek, his hat pulled low over his brow, his gaze abstracted from present scenes, his soul filled in all its chambers of sense with that piteous cry.

When they arrived at Mystery Island the mid-day sun had plowed his passage to the zenith without a cloud to vex his

progress. They made haste to secure their boats, then dropped into Indian file, twenty men behind their leader, pushing and breaking their way through the overgrown path toward the old house in the woods.

The sharp clink of their stout heels sprang up behind them in startling echoes along the wide hall and stone stairway.

Upon the threshold of the room Lenartson had left yesterday, so full of tragic pictures memory would ever recall, he stopped a moment, looking over his shoulder into the pale and kindly faces behind him.

"Poor old Madame! It was here, boys, I left her yesterday after all was over."

Thus remarking, he turned his face inward and approached the bed. He stood before it aghast; the bed was empty! There was the yellow, crumpled linen, there were the soiled blankets and tattered coverlid which the long, thin, bejeweled fingers had plucked at yesterday. But she and the dog were gone!

For the space of ten seconds each man stood staring in helpless silence. Then one of them ventured to suggest that he had made a mistake in the room. No one thought of doubting him. His face was too plain an index of his astonishment.

"That's it," concluded Bill Maynard. "You gut addled. Let's try another room."

Lenartson, continuing to gaze in a bewildered way at the bed, shook his head. "No, it was right here, and no other place, that I passed through the experience I have related to you. There must be some other person on the premises, and all that talk about being deserted was Madame's lunacy. Let's look about."

As they commenced their investigation, the noise of their approach and departure startled the bats from their corners in the empty rooms. Everything was covered with dust and mold; even the chairs and floors were thickly encrusted. Through the holes in the roof the rain had beaten unchecked and the resulting fungus life consumed, as it grew, the wooden sills and doorways. Cobwebs hung in festoons from the ceiling, and cut in elaborate patterns of gray lace the corners of the rooms, in one of which a rabbit had made her nest and was rearing her young. Across the threshold

of another a serpent slipped into the golden shimmer of the outer sunshine.

In a cupboard was found a china service, and a silver or pewter pot so black with long exposure to the air and moisture, its true metal could not at once be determined. And everywhere was the all-recording dust, covering the entire house like a pall cloth upon the face of the dead. There was no food, nor evidence of recent occupancy in the entire house.

Once again they looked at each other, and then to Lenartson, the question trembling upon each man's lips he feared to utter.

Superstition repossessed them. Lenartson, dazed and distressed, placed his hand against his forehead, struggling to think.

Ah! the devil-weed and the treasure! If these things existed in reality, it would establish the fact of his having spoken with a dying woman yesterday.

"Boys, I must leave you for half an hour. Will you wait for me here?"

"Out there," they consented gruffly, pointing to the garden. No man cared to remain within.

In feverish impatience he darted away from them, tearing his way along the gloomy woodland path toward the spot where that terrible thing grew.

At the point where the opening would reveal the cliff, he stopped short, struck by a chill of horror. Great drops of perspiration rolled over his face. His heart beat with stifling throbs in his bosom, while his hands clenched themselves unconsciously.

In this mood, appalled by awful doubt, he dashed out into the open space, — then stopped short, an exclamation of joy bursting from his fevered lips. Thank God, it was there, and she had been!

Steeped in the still sunshine of the upper air, that monster plant still crawled over the gray head of the great boulder, emitting fiery sparks from its bosom, as with each lift of its huge body the round rings of its red blossoms flashed into view. The long, gray, snake-like limbs, bristling with their gay corolla of spiked leaves, swung, contracted, and lengthened, exactly as he had seen them yesterday.

Cautiously he crept forward, his nervous fingers clutching the

handle of his knife, treading carefully through the long grass which appeared to grow here like some dangerous accomplice of the enemy.

Now he understood why no shrub or tree grew near the boulder. The devil-plant had, as it grew, grasped, one after another, every living thing which could afford resistance to its malignant clutch. It had made itself a supreme evil in the garden of God, annihilating all living beauty excepting the long, pliant grass, through which it might creep and glide towards the object to be destroyed.

Not a wonder Madame, who knew its nature, moaned, "It will encompass the land." And the treasure beneath it — Ugh! the whole thing grew uncanny. He commenced to feel that any attempt to recover a treasure upon which rested the curse of Madame's passion-withered lips would prove fatal. He could almost see the ghastly glistening of dead men's bones impaled in the meshes of that fearful thing. An accursed root had sprung out of the practical Maine soil, engrafted upon it from some kingdom of the damned.

A shadow crossed the sun, followed by another and still another in quick succession, like the swift lifting of gigantic wings.

The trees shivered. The air leaped at once into strong currents, gathering velocity and darkness as they traveled. The sky lowered with a blaze of fury, followed by deafening thunder and accompanied by the roar of the sea.

Lenartson felt himself raised bodily by the wind and dashed down again like chaff. In terror, lest the mighty breath of the tempest make him the plaything of yonder devil-weed, now tossing forward and flinging up its long, crawling arms into the sulphurous air, he grasped the trunk of a tree with his arms, and flung himself face down upon the ground.

Ships went down everywhere along the coast that day. Their own boat dragged her anchor and was driven upon the rocks. Houses were unroofed and blown about like paper toys. It was a day of doom. It was like the passionate protest of the dead in league with the elements.

"I would haunt the land forever. I will not lie on this accursed soil. Bear me back to France!"

Pale, and shaken, and drenched by the pitying floods of the

sky, Lenartson crept back, when the tempest was past, to the old house, where he met a company of stern, white faces.

"Boys," he said brokenly, "I cannot talk of what has happened on this mysterious island. I only ask to be taken away. Bill Maynard, give me your hand, old boy. I am no longer able to jeer at your superstitions."

None seemed inclined to talk.

When at last they swung out upon the broad, blue breast of the ocean, under a sunny sky, every man thanked God he had left the place forever.

And although at times some bold lad dares to steer his skiff beneath the haunted cliff, where he declares the dog Rollin may still be seen on watch at the cove, there has been none other ambitious to investigate the mystery of Mystery Island.

The old house in the woods remains untenanted and unvisited. Dank and dark the devil-weed swings in the undisturbed silence of its green oasis.

The treasure buried upon the island is to many but a vague speculation. To Lenartson there appears no doubt as to the reality of the concealed treasure, and the Grand Madame is to him one of the most marvelous mysteries of life. Who was the Grand Madame? What was it that he saw at the old house? What did he hear? He had not slept and dreamed. Was it a visitation from the other world? A disturbed and earthbound soul enacting the closing scene of its mortality? If not, what? Where did the Grand Madame and the dog Rollin disappear?



A Mental Mischance.

BY THOMAS F. ANDERSON.



ALBERT REEVES could never fix the exact date when he discovered that he was a mind reader. Whether he had been born with the power or had been suddenly endowed with it by some unexplainable agency will probably always remain a mystery. But this much is certain:

He was yet comparatively new to this world and its wicked ways when the fulness of the mysterious power was upon him, and was not yet twenty when he began to put it to a practical, money-making use.

Young Reeves first utilized his unique gift in this manner as an amateur detective, with the same success as when, a few years earlier, he had been able to divine the intentions of his school teacher toward him in the matter of corporal punishment, by getting that worthy's mind in occultation with his own. In the same manner he had been able to quickly gauge the real depth of feeling entertained toward him by the various young ladies of his affection, and he often remarked that if others were kindly favored by nature with the same power of mental analysis, the divorce courts would not have to hold so many extra sessions as they do nowadays.

Naturally, his detective career was a wonderful success. Indeed, he might have achieved the fame of a Byrnes and Vidocq in one had he chosen to remain in that profession, for he had the advantage over all other detectives in that he was enabled not only to read the thoughts of a guilty man, but to diagnose the mind of a man who had not committed a crime but was planning to.

In this way he could not only detect crime, but could prevent it, which is really the first duty of a police force, according to the printed instructions that are posted up at the station-houses.

Many a time indeed this remarkable man walked into a bank,

ostensibly to have a note discounted or a check cashed, but in reality to see if the cashier or paying teller were contemplating a sudden raise of salary at the expense of the institution; and more than once his efforts were rewarded by discovering a trusted official hovering on the brink of a precipice, as it were, perhaps ready to fly with his ill-gotten gains that very night, had not Reeves been instrumental in saving both the official and the bank.

But in spite of his phenomenal success, the detective business palled upon young Reeves before he had been in it two years. There was too much human misery connected with it, too many broken-hearted wives and children, too many ruined homes. The money earned from other people's wretchedness fairly burned in his pocket. Besides, his inclinations had always pointed to newspaper work, and while he lacked training as a writer, he knew that the reputation that he had already won in the police department was the best possible guarantee of success on that great detective agency, the daily press. And so it proved. Within three days after he made known his proposed change of calling, Reeves received five tempting offers from as many big dailies in New York, Boston, and Chicago, two of which had come by telegraph, while a third was tendered by a special messenger who had traveled hundreds of miles to make the proposition. Of course, the police departments of various cities and the leading detective agencies in the land made heavy counter bids to retain him, but to no purpose.

After a week's deliberation Reeves accepted a position as special writer on the city staff of a metropolitan daily, where he was welcomed as a unique and valuable addition to modern journalism. Of course he didn't fill an editorial chair. A journalistic mind reader would have had little chance to exercise his powers inside the four walls of an office. But in his position as star reporter he rose almost at a bound to the position of the leading newspaper man of his time. In less than two months he had gained such a reputation for phenomenal "scoops" that his photograph was displayed in the shop windows along with the Duke of Marlborough and the latest theatrical star, while his life was made the subject of half a dozen articles in the popular periodicals. And this reputation he won in the simplest possible way.

He had only to go to any man, no matter how high in official station or how taciturn and reserved, and by simply getting his subject's thoughts fixed upon the desired topic, could drag from him, without his knowledge, the fullest details of the affair.

Statesmen and cabinet officials, with weighty secrets of the greatest public importance locked up, as they thought, in their own minds, were as easy prey for him as the bank cashiers used to be when he was a detective.

Nothing that he got upon the trail of ever escaped him, and the country almost became involved in a war with another nation once, on account of the premature publication of some momentous diplomatic secret that he had brought forth from its hiding place in Washington.

Naturally, this phenomenally endowed young man's paper became so famous for forecasting accurately great events, exposing big criminal conspiracies and discounting gigantic railroad deals, that its circulation grew to enormous proportions, and before he had been on its staff six months it was quoted as an infallible authority all over the land.

Reeves had worked on like this for about a year, gaining new laurels day after day and getting his salary doubled as regularly as the month went by, when he awoke one day from his absorption in his profession to the fact that he was accumulating gold as well as glory. To his savings in the detective service he had added during the past year everything except his very modest living expenses. And he now found himself the possessor of the nest egg for a fortune. With this discovery a new idea flashed into his busy brain. Why not take advantage of his great mental power and make himself a second Vanderbilt or Rockefeller by watching the big deals in the stock market? If "insiders" who were not mind readers could make princely fortunes out of their knowledge, why couldn't he?

The idea had no sooner suggested itself than he put it into practice.

It worked like a charm.

All he had to do was to walk into the offices of George Gould, or Russell Sage, or Chauncey Depew, or any of the other big men who change the railroad map or the industrial situation to

suit themselves, and talk pleasantly about the weather, or the crops, or the prospects of this or that stock.

Then if, on the occasion of such visits, any of these great manipulators had a big scheme on hand, Reeves quickly became an "insider" on his own invitation and bought or sold stocks as the case demanded.

In less than six weeks he was independently wealthy, forging ahead of all the younger financiers as easily as he had outrivalled his journalistic colleagues.

One day about two months after this newest young Napoleon of finance entered upon his Wall Street career, he became convinced that a "deal" of more than ordinary proportions was on foot. He tested a dozen big men of his financial acquaintance — for he was able now to give even big men valuable "tips" occasionally — without getting any satisfactory clew, and finally decided that a certain well-known financier, who seemed to be on the minds of those whom Reeves had sounded, was the man he wanted to get at. As it happened, Reeves was on specially friendly terms with this financier, who was of a somewhat literary turn of mind, and liked nothing better than to discuss the degeneracy of journalism and kindred topics with the brilliant young journalist. Accordingly, the young man received a pleasant greeting when he presented himself, although he soon discovered that the financier was very deeply engrossed in some important matter.

It was an oppressively hot day, and the headache Reeves had acquired in his excited search for the all-important clew caused his brain to be less receptive than usual. He had no difficulty, however, in learning that the magnate was struggling with the details of some great "deal."

While they sat there and talked about a rather trivial matter that the younger man had made the excuse for his visit, the latter fixed his mind on the other's as well as he could in his fatigued state, and what he learned almost sent him into a delirium of excitement.

The thought transference took place rather slowly, but when it ended he was in possession of information concerning one of the most gigantic pieces of stock manipulation that the century had witnessed.

Without going into details, it contemplated the consolidation of some twenty-five of the biggest railroad systems in the land, many of them heretofore at odds with one another, in a manner that could not fail to at once send up the value of all of them at least twenty-five per cent., and in some cases fully fifty per cent.

Millions of dollars were to be saved in expenses alone, and the aggregate capital represented was almost beyond ordinary comprehension.

Just when the deal was to be consummated, Reeves could not determine, but as the mind of the financier seemed engrossed with its details, to the exclusion of everything else, the young man felt assured that the date could not be far removed.

In a week, a day, an hour even, he told himself, as he left this friend's office, the gigantic scheme might be sprung on the public. The stock markets, both here and in London, would be thrown into a frenzy of speculative madness, and railroad stocks would jump to fabulous figures. Now was the time to act. By investing his fortune immediately, Reeves could, as he found by swift calculation, literally own, if not the earth, at least a big share of it. Strangely enough, however, this knowledge, instead of exalting him, only steadied his nerves. During his walk from Wall Street to Broadway, Reeves evolved his whole plan of action. It was then within an hour and a half of the time when the banks would close, but in less than three quarters of that time he had drawn out every cent of ready money that he had on deposit. Then hurrying back to Wall Street, he proceeded to unload every sort of negotiable security he possessed, and to place orders to buy on margin blocks of stocks representing every one of the railroads that were in the deal. This accomplished, he felt that in a few weeks' time he would be able, if he liked, to pay off the national debt or restore the gold balance.

That night the young man's self-control gave way, and he went to bed with a raging fever.

When he awoke again, he painfully asked the white-robed nurse standing near his bed, how long he had been there, for it didn't take him long to realize what had happened.

She replied, "Ten days."

Next day they allowed him to have a newspaper, and he nervously turned to the financial page. Almost the very first paragraph his eyes fell upon was one describing how Burlington, Northwestern, "Nickel Plate," and several other of the big railroads in the great "deal," had already dropped ten to twenty-five points "since the big silver panic set in one week ago."

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Two or three months later, while he was still convalescing, young Reeves received a nicely bound volume. It bore the signature of his friend, the literary financier, and was proved on examination to be a fantastic novel of the twentieth century, entitled "The Great Railroad Revolution."

For the first few pages the invalid gave only a languid interest to the tale, which opened like half a dozen other stories he had read of the "Looking Backward" variety. But when he came to a certain chapter, wherein was described as one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century the gigantic consolidation of the Burlington, the Northwestern, and a score of other big systems, he let the book drop from his hand.

Like an electric shock it came to him that what he had read in the literary financier's mind on that fatal day had been, not a speculative scheme, but part of the plot for a novel! Instead of being on the verge of consummating a railroad deal, the man had been simply evolving from his imagination a chapter based upon the modern tendency toward combines. It was upon the fantastic fancy of a novelist, and not the schemes of a financier, that Reeves had staked and lost a fortune!

Albert Reeves is not reading other people's minds any more. Whether it was the fever or the fact that he had once read a mind falsely that destroyed the charm can never be determined; but this is certain: since the day when a cog slipped in the wheel of his fortune, the mysterious power that so nearly made him one of the magnates of the world, is his no longer.

If he had not lost his money also he would not have cared so much, for he could then have bought out a paper or opened a real estate office.

As it is, he is now working as reporter at a salary of fifteen dollars a week.

A Peg-Leg Ghost.

BY WELLINGTON VANDIVER.



I WAS raised among the plantations of Southern Alabama, had an old black mammy, and was imbued with all the superstitions of my foster-mother. And though I've lived to have many of them knocked out of me, there are some that have worked in deeper than the skin. There was an old "cunjah" (conjure) nigger on my father's plantation when I was a lad, and I believed just as firmly in his miraculous powers as I now trust in the efficacy of a recently decided case. Why, I've seen him do things that would make your hair stand on end, and that no book of philosophy I've ever read could account for.

Every darkey within ten miles of that place would have suffered death before arousing the enmity of that old "cunjah" doctor, and no young buck or maid ever began a courting affair without first procuring a love charm from old Cato.

I left the place and grew up to manhood, and had almost forgotten all about conjuring and such trash, when an incident in the trial of a criminal case recalled it all again very vividly.

I was called on to defend a splendid specimen of the negro race for killing his wife. He was a Hercules in bronze, and had lived happily with a quadroon wife until he had the misfortune to lose his leg in falling from the roof of a house,—he being a carpenter by trade. After this his wife seemed to have lost affection for him; she allowed the attentions of other men, and worked him into a frenzy with her flirtations. He remonstrated, she continued; he threatened, she replied with counter threats; and one day, when fully convinced of her infidelity to him, he came to town, purchased a pistol, announced his intention to kill her, hobbled a mile with the loaded pistol openly in his hand, and reaching home, followed by a curious crowd, he deliberately walked

up to his wife, put the pistol against her bosom, and shot her five times; then stumped away, leaving her dead, with her clothing burning.

Well, he sent for me to come to the jail and arrange about his defense. When I reached his cell he related about what I have told you, and I frankly told him I saw but little chance to prevent his being hung. Not a single minute did that darkey wait before breaking out in a loud horse-laugh.

"O Lawd, colonel," said he, "dar ain't a bit o' danger o' dat."

"The blazes, there ain't!" said I. "What's goin' to keep a jury of good and lawful men from stretchin' that yaller neck o' yours, I would like to know. Why, niggah! there ain't enough lawyers in Alabama to save you!"

"Why, colonel," said he, "I've got a cunjah charm on me, made by old Cato Feels, that's a sartin 'ventive o' death; you just go 'long and make your poration an' your 'jections, an' I'll come out all right."

It was no use talking to the fellow, and so I prepared the best defense I could under the circumstances.

Harry, my client, eyed the jury closely during the trial, and once when I happened to be disconcerted at a sudden artful move of the prosecution, he leaned over and whispered to me:—

"It's all right, colonel; I got cunjah stuff for six o' dem jury-men, and I'd get plum clear ef I could have got 'nuff for de odder six. You jes rar an' pitch; dey *can't* hang me!"

Well, I covered more "space and high reason," did more wind work, talked longer, and said less in that case than ever before in my life, and during the whole time the nigger never took his eyes off the six jurymen, nor did he cease to mutter and work his fingers.

The judge gave a terribly bloody, vindictive charge, and when the jury retired I felt it would be a matter of but a few hours with my client's neck.

Greatly to my astonishment, the jury didn't come back the first day, nor on the next, and it was whispered over town that six of the panel were for acquittal!

You could have knocked me down with a feather, and it took six drinks of whisky to arouse me to the situation. The jury

after four days came back, and sentenced him to the State farm for six years !

But I haven't got to the strangest part of the story yet. The negro gave me a deed to his little home, a mile from the town, as a fee ; there were about two acres of land, a fine well of water, and a comfortable cabin on it.

I tried to rent the cabin, but couldn't get a darkey to occupy it for love nor money, — they all said it was haunted. In the meantime, Harry went to the State penitentiary, and, after arriving there, he wrote me that I'd have to get some conjure doctor to "obeah" — that is, remove the spell from the house, or no negro would stay on the place.

I rented it to a Northern colored preacher, with an educated wife, and he moved out in three days ; said it was too noisy at night. My next tenant was a furnace hand, with six children, and he stayed only one night ; said there were too many colored women standing around the cabin at night to suit him.

The neighbors wouldn't draw water from the well after dusk. They claimed that Harry's wife came to the well and helped 'em, and that when they lifted the bucket there was always a small piece of burnt clothing on top of the water in the bucket. They even showed a lot of burnt rags to prove it.

Finally I got mad and had the cabin torn down, and every vestige of the timber burnt up, and I built two new and modern cottages about one hundred yards west of the former location, and quite near a public street. But all my tenants in the new houses remained but a few days, and then "folded up their tents like the Arab."

Well, I was at my wits' end. About this time I received another letter from my client in the penitentiary, asking if the place had been "obeaed," and urging that I employ old Cato Feels to fix it so the ghosts wouldn't walk there. That came like an inspiration, and I sent a nigger fifty miles with a horse and buggy to fetch the old rascal. He arrived three days later, — but he wouldn't put foot on the place until midnight on the first night the moon began to wane.

I went there with him on the night selected, and the mayor, two drummers, and a Universalist preacher accompanied me.

You see, the Universalist was just one of those fellows who was always looking into the curious, and came along anyhow.

The house had been situated on top of a little plateau about seventy-five yards square, and the soil there was a slaty white clay mixed with sand, was dead level, and clean of grass and rubbish.

The old darkey had on a red wool blanket, which he wore Mexican-Poncho fashion, a queer kettle-looking iron hat, and was bare-footed and bare-legged. He made us all stand at least ten yards away from him, and charged us particularly not to come close to him while the charm was working.

He squatted down on the ground, and for about fifteen minutes he chanted or crooned the most outlandish gibberish I ever heard. It seemed to be a sort of crude poetry, with the refrain of:—

“Halum, skalum zaglum illiah,
Pollion Rollion ipsum killiah.”

Where in thunder he got this dog Latin, or what it means, I can't answer; I only know it sounded mighty solemn.

After awhile he arose, and taking a short, black, thick wand from under his blanket, he walked ten steps backwards, and stooping over, he began to draw, upside down, on the ground, the familiar diagram that the children used to use in playing the old out-door game, “hop-scotch.”

The fact is, I had never thought of what geometric figures there were in that old hop-scotch game. First, you know, there is a parallelogram, then, on top of that a square, then on this follow four right-angled triangles, and lastly, an arch.

In each corner of this diagram he placed small dolls made of the resin of the pine tree, figures fashioned rudely like a woman, and stooping over them he blew his breath on them, and all at once each of those puppets broke out into flame as quickly as a sky-rocket, and continued burning as long as we stayed.

Around all this he drew a large circle, still walking backward, and mumbling in an undertone in a way to make your flesh crawl; the fact is, he reminded me of old Horse-Leg Jones, at a back-woods prayer-meeting, except that old Horse-Leg had a different way of breathing through his nose.

Well, I got so interested that I couldn't stay away from near

the old sorcerer, and inadvertently I stepped into the ring old Cato had drawn; immediately I felt a hot streak run down my leg, heard the horse-laugh of my client Harry break out exactly as it had in the jail, and old Cato fell to the ground as if lightning-struck.

We poured cold water on the old fellow, and when he got so that he could talk, he bitterly upbraided me for breaking the charm, saying that the spell would now work backwards.

And I'm willing to be branded as a monumental Ananias all over America, if every night you can't hear at that spot the familiar hobble of the fellow that I know to be safe in the penitentiary walls; you can hear his laugh, and you can see a track of rings as round as a dollar, that no rain will erase, and punctuated with the dot and carry, the dent of the wooden leg and the flat foot of Harry, running around that spot.

It may rain floods, but the next day there is the same old peg-leg track, and every night from the street can be heard that same horse-laugh, that I'd swear to among a thousand voices.

In the hop-sotch ring there has grown up a red flower, strange in these parts, but which the florists pronounce an African tiger-lily, and by which the sharp outline of the ring is as well preserved as if a gardener had carefully planted them.

Recently I had a letter from the warden of the penitentiary, saying that every evening just at sundown Harry dropped into a cataleptic sleep, from which no power could awaken him until the next day at dawn.

People may sneer at conjuring as much as they like. I know the facts, and I know that night after night Harry's old home is haunted by a live ghost.



My Friend, Walker.

BY GERALDINE MEYRICK.



It was an innocent-looking note, but I shuddered as I read it; for it came to me as convincing evidence of the insanity of an old friend.

It read as follows:—

“SQUATTERS’ RANCH,
“CATTON, KERN COUNTY.

“*Dear Cole*:—Have succeeded at last. Come down here if you want to hear some real good horse-sense. I think the conversation will prove interesting.

“Yours sincerely,
“GEO. WALKER.”

I will make the story as short as possible. Walker and I were born in the same small town in New York State, and had been inseparable companions until he went to Princeton, and I was placed in a lawyer’s office in Boston. After that, I somehow lost sight of him, though I occasionally heard of him as beginning to make his way in the scientific world. Common acquaintances would sometimes mention him; always praising his ability, but always adding: “Pity he’s such a crank.” Now, I’m one of the practical sort, and despise cranks; so I took no trouble to renew the friendship.

In course of time I married and came out to San Francisco, where, after hard work, I have established a fair practise, and raised a respectable family. I put this in, because I want you to understand, from the first, that I am an ordinary, level-headed sort of man, not easily imposed on; and, as I said before, possessing a natural aversion to cranks and their notions.

Well, one windy, foggy night, I was hurrying from my office to take a car home, when a hand was laid on my shoulder. Turning round, I came face to face with Walker. It was impossible to

mistake his peculiar features, in spite of the changes made by time. He looked shabby and rather dissipated, but seemed so heartily glad to see me that I felt quite touched, and after a few words of greeting, rashly asked him to come home and take dinner with me. I could have kicked myself the next minute, for somehow he didn't look just the sort of man to take into one's household. He evidently guessed my thoughts, for he looked down at his shabby boots with a faint smile; then said, quietly:—

"Thanks, old man; but I'm not exactly in order for dining out. Tell you what, though. Come in here and have a drink, and we can talk a few minutes, if you have the time to spare."

"In here" proved to be, not the gay saloon on one side of us, but a demure little bakery on the other. We went in, sat down at a little table in a dark corner, and were soon enjoying some fragrant coffee, ignoring the inevitable doughnuts which accompanied it.

"Well, a great many things have happened since we last met," I said, after a somewhat awkward silence.

"Yes; and I want to tell you something about my share of them," said Walker. "You see, I have kept track of you right along, and know pretty well everything of interest in your career; but I fancy you don't know much about me."

I felt reproved, and said nothing.

"In fact," continued Walker, fixing his eyes on his spoon as he stirred his coffee slowly, "in fact, there are some passages in my life which none of my friends know, or ever shall know, if I can help it. The truth is, I have made rather a failure of my life so far. I studied awfully hard for a time; then, just as I was on the point of achieving something, my brain got tired out, and—well, I tried to stimulate it. You may guess the result. Keely cure helped me some, but I haven't much confidence in myself now. That's why we're drinking coffee," he added, apologetically.

"What are you doing now?" I asked, rather at a loss what to say.

"Ranching, if you'll believe it. That is, I've rented a few acres down in Kern County."

"Do you find it pays?"

"No, not yet. But it will, some day. It will make me famous yet."

I looked at him searchingly. There undoubtedly was a curious gleam in his eyes. Was the man crazy? Or, equally unpleasant, was he hoping to borrow a few hundred dollars from me on the strength of his brilliant prospects as a farmer? I shook my head disparagingly. "Farmers don't seem very prosperous, as a rule," I said.

"Don't they? Really, I know very little about them. You see, I'm trying something a little out of the ordinary. It's an experiment, of course; but you will see that it succeeds. I haven't told a soul about it till now; but we were chums once, so I'll trust you with the secret. You will laugh over it now, I guess, but not in six months' time."

He leaned over the table towards me, and lowered his voice.

"You know that fellow, Garner, has been trying for a long while to understand the language of monkeys. Well, he's all right, of course, and he may do wonders yet; but I am going to get ahead of him. Monkeys *do* talk, no doubt, and he may learn something from them; but I'm tackling a more intelligent animal, the horse. Horses don't exactly talk, but they communicate with each other. They don't chatter and grimace; they are too intelligent for that. They are a decent, clean race, that a man may be proud to associate with. Now I have six horses down on my ranch; have been studying with them for a year past, and" — with a triumphant blow of his fist on the shaky little table, — "I have already mastered their language, or whatever you choose to call their medium of communication."

I looked at him in alarm. He noticed my expression, and laughed shortly.

"I see you think I'm a crank; but I am telling you the simple truth. Now, I'll tell you one thing more, and then you can go home. I am going to teach them to speak in *our* language; or, rather, to express themselves in such a way that any man can understand them. I have one nearly trained now. Will let you know when he is perfect. But mind, not a word of this to any one; not till it is a complete success."

With that, he jumped up, paid for the coffee, and disappeared.

I heard nothing of him for two months. Then came the note given above. I started for Kern County the day after receiving it, though not without feeling that I was running a serious risk. I really would not have gone, only it seemed mean not to go down and look after Walker, when his mania was evidently coming to a crisis.

Arrived at the little town of Catton, I inquired of the station-agent where Squatters' Ranch was. He looked me up and down curiously before he spoke.

"Where the crazy man lives, do you mean?"

"I mean where Mr. George Walker lives," I replied, with some asperity. No doubt Walker *was* crazy, but I did not like to have any man *I* was going to see spoken of in that way.

"Oh, well," said the agent, "I guess he's about as crazy as they make them. That's his house, right over there, with the big barn just back of it."

"Ah, yes! He raises horses, doesn't he?" I asked carelessly.

"Well, now, I don't know as he *raises* them. But he has half a dozen or so. And he makes as much fuss over them as if they were white elephants."

I picked up my valise, and prepared to walk the short distance from the depot to Walker's house, when the agent, after a particularly deliberate expectoration, beckoned me nearer with a side jerk of his head, and inquired in a confidential tone:—

"Say, do you know that man at all?"

"Yes, I know him well," I replied firmly.

"Well, now, look here. I wish you'd just tell me what he is trying to do with those horses. Some folks say he's training them for a circus?" Here he looked at me interrogatively, but I said nothing. He picked up a bit of wood and whittled it carefully, as he walked beside me to the end of the platform. "And there are others say he's crazy and ought to be sent to Stockton. But I reckon he's harmless; he hasn't hurt anybody yet, anyway. Well, so long. Guess you ain't much of a talker. No matter; so long."

"So long," I said, and continued on my way with an anxious heart. "*He hasn't hurt anybody yet.*" What a nasty way to put it.

The house pointed out was a low, whitewashed cottage close to the road, while the big barn lay some fifty feet back of it. The premises looked to be in good order, without anything extraordinary about them, unless it was that they were a little neater than is usual around a farmhouse. I crossed the little garden in front and knocked at the narrow door. It was opened at once, and Walker, grasping me by the hand, literally pulled me into the little parlor. He was looking positively youthful; his clothes were spruce, and there was a festive air about him generally.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, after helping me off with my overcoat. "I half feared you wouldn't come. Now, didn't you think I was fooling you? Or crazy?"

"Oh, I came as soon as I could possibly get away," I answered evasively.

"Now sit down and rest yourself, and we'll have a cup of tea. Sorry I haven't any wine to offer you, but — well, I don't keep any in the house. Discretion is the better, etc."

As he talked, Walker busied himself in lighting a little lamp, filling the kettle, and bringing out cups. It was a fine day in winter, just cool enough to make the hot drink by the fire very welcome, and somehow I enjoyed myself in spite of my anxiety. Besides, Walker talked for some time on very commonplace subjects, in a very commonplace manner, till I began to hope I had been wrong in doubting his sanity. As I put down my cup for the second time, he rose, and said: —

"Now we'll go out to the barn and I'll introduce you to the Prince of Darkness.

"Don't look scared. It's only the name I have given my favorite horse."

He led the way through the house, out of the back door, and across the yard, while I followed reluctantly. I noticed that there were no houses within call; and there was an oppressive lack of the life which usually surrounds a house in the country. Some horses were grazing in a field near by, and a big dog was sunning himself near the barn; but they were silent, and there was no cheerful cackling of hens or grunting of pigs.

At the barn door Walker stopped, and turned on me almost fiercely.

"Look here," he said. "I don't really know you very well now, but we were chums once, and so I trust you. But I want your solemn promise that you will not reveal the manner in which the Prince communicates with you. You are quite at liberty to repeat what he says, but the way in which he says it is my discovery, and I prefer to give it to the world myself. Do you promise?"

"I do."

"Then come along."

The barn was a large, rambling old place, but we went at once into a roomy box-stall, in which stood a handsome black horse, stamping impatiently. There was a comfortably natural smell of hay and dust; but as I looked into the eyes of the Prince of Darkness, I thought I detected in them a too intelligent gleam, and half expected him to address me in some uncanny voice.

Being utterly ignorant of scientific subjects and scientific terms, it is doubtful if I could rightly explain the manner of the Prince's communication, even if I felt at liberty to do so, which is far from being the case. Some of my friends insist that I was hypnotized; that the thoughts which I believed to emanate from the horse were impressed on me by Walker; but I would remind you that I am strong-minded and not easily impressed. However, I will not attempt to explain *how* we communicated our thoughts. Suffice it to say that we *did* communicate them; and so interested did I become that I was surprised when the increasing darkness warned us that the short winter day was nearly ended.

At first there was merely an interchange of polite phrases between us. The Prince was kind enough to say that he was delighted to meet me, and I expressed my pleasure at being enabled to understand the views and opinions of a member of the equine race. These preliminaries over, we talked for some time on various subjects; but, somewhat to my surprise, I found that the Prince had no strikingly original opinions. At last I ventured to ask him whether he did not find great pleasure in his new accomplishment. In a minute his aspect changed. He threw up his head with a sharp cry, and stamped violently. Then, hanging his head, as if ashamed, he expressed himself as willing to bear much misery for his master's sake.

I was naturally somewhat alarmed by his sudden outburst, but Walker appeared to be completely upset by it. He turned white to the lips, and shook visibly. After a few moments of silence, he went up to the horse, and flinging one arm lovingly over the glossy neck, exclaimed : —

“Poor old fellow! Why, why didn’t you tell me it pained you?”

The Prince of Darkness shook his head mournfully.

“I can bear it, I can bear it,” he said. “But oh, it is terrible to have thoughts! Before you taught me your words I never thought, I could only feel. But now! It is terrible. Thought after thought rushing through my brain, and never a moment’s rest; for every thought suggests another, and there is no end to them. The agony is fearful at times. But it must be borne now, so don’t worry about me. I suppose you suffer in the same way yourself, only you are accustomed to it.”

Still with his face white and set, Walker filled the manger with fresh hay, stroked the Prince’s velvety nose, and went out of the barn, actually tottering in his walk. I followed slowly, quite at a loss what to do, even what to think of it all. I was no longer ready to pronounce Walker crazy; he had actually accomplished the marvelous feat he had undertaken. All the same, I was far from happy about him. When I came out of the barn he was not in sight. I hurried to the house, and found him in the parlor, lying full length on the floor, and sobbing as if his heart would break.

“Come, come, Walker,” I said. “Cheer up. You have achieved a wonderful success.”

He sat up, stared at me, then laughed bitterly.

“Success? Yes. But at what a price. Just conceive the misery that poor brute has undergone; and I never once thought of it. And now I cannot undo my work. I know what he suffers. I know how his head aches and his brain throbs, while he tries to rest and cannot. O Prince, Prince! That I should have put you in such torment!”

So he went on, till nearly midnight. It was heart-rending to hear his self-reproaches. I tried to comfort him by saying that the horse would get over his mental troubles in time, as soon as

he acquired full mental strength. Doubtless his education had been advanced too rapidly, and a little care would soon make him all right. But Walker would not be comforted; time had increased his own mental troubles, and it would be the same with the Prince. At last, when I saw that he was too exhausted to offer much resistance, I ordered him to go to bed, assuring him that in the morning we would be able to devise some way of relieving the horse. In my own mind I thought it would really be best to kill the poor animal, but I did not venture to suggest it then. Walker had worked so hard for his success, and the result was so marvelous, that it seemed wicked to throw it all away; yet I shuddered when I recalled the agonized eyes of the Prince.

Walker insisted on my taking his bed, saying that he would sleep well enough on the sofa by the fire. I went into his room, but left the door open, and kept a close watch over him until he went into a heavy sleep, when, I suppose, I soon followed his example.

The next thing I remember is waking up suddenly and fancying I heard a terrible stamping and whinnying, and then the report of a pistol, followed immediately by a second shot. All was quiet again before I was thoroughly awake. I sat up and listened carefully. No, there was no sound, except heavy, regular breathing in the next room. The fire and lamp had both gone out, and I could not see Walker; but he must be having a splendid sleep, the best possible medicine for his nerves. Having decided that the noises I had heard must have been mere echoes from the land of dreams, I soon fell asleep again.

I did not wake again until the sunlight fell on my face through the blindless window. I jumped out of bed and looked into the next room. Walker was not there; but lying in front of the fireplace was a large dog asleep. As I listened to his heavy, regular breathing, a horrible fear came over me. Hastily putting on my things, I rushed out of the house and over to the barn. The door was open. My heart beat like a hammer. I stopped a moment to gather strength, and listened. There were no sounds. I went in. There was the same comforting smell of hay and dust. I passed one or two stalls where horses were contentedly munching.

A cat jumped down from a loft and rubbed against my legs, purring. There were no other sounds. Somehow, I could not raise my voice to call for Walker, though I would have given anything to hear him answer me.

I opened the door of the box where I had talked with the Prince of Darkness. They were both lying there, side by side, dead. A pistol was still held in Walker's stiffened grasp. The eyes of the Prince of Darkness were closed, and his expression was one of almost human peace.





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Professor Whirlwind.

BY ALLEN QUINAN.



HE was a majestic, taciturn man, with a beardless, bloodless face, and a massive head, entirely bald except for a tuft of coal-black hair just above the nape of the neck. What his real name was I never knew, but, for reasons that will appear later, I always think of him as Professor Whirlwind.

Our acquaintance came about on board the ocean steamer *Teutonic*. For several days I had noticed this strange figure pacing up and down the deck, often casting swift glances seaward and muttering to himself. One morning, as I lay in my steamer chair watching this curious proceeding, I was astonished to see the Professor stop short, his head thrust forward and inclined to one side as if listening intently, while his gaze was riveted on a funnel-shaped cloud that had suddenly loomed up in the horizon.

For a moment he stood like this, as rigid as a statue, his eyes, ordinarily dull and filmy, flashing forth a lurid light. The next instant he threw up his hands convulsively, as if to shut out some dreadful vision, and tottered backward like a drunken man. Fearing an accident, I sprang to aid him. But by an effort he recovered himself, and, wheeling about, walked hastily away.

As he turned, something fell from his person and rolled swiftly across the deck. Another moment and the object would have disappeared into the sea, had I not caught it up out of harm's way. It was an oval case of gold, whose spring, broken by the jar, had started open, disclosing the miniature portrait of what seemed, in my momentary glimpse, a very young girl with the delicate beauty of a flower. Closing the case, with the feeling that I had involuntarily intruded upon another's private affairs, I hurried after the portrait's owner. I found him in his stateroom, his eyes carefully scanning the floor, apparently searching for the

miniature case, which I now produced. As he grasped it, with a sigh of relief, the spring once more started open, and, though this time I looked away, I felt that the Professor divined that its contents were known to me. At any rate, after a moment's hesitation, he began : —

“Very likely you were amazed at my actions on deck and think me a coward, if not a maniac. And then this picture — you must have wondered what relation could exist between that beautiful young girl and one like myself. But since you have seen — Well, do you care to hear a story, a true story, though one that staggers human belief?”

“Certainly,” I said, “if you are sure that you care to confide in a stranger.”

I had observed that while I was speaking, his eyes, instead of looking into mine, were fixed upon my mouth. It was not, however, till he touched his ear significantly that I knew he was deaf and could understand my speech only by watching my lips.

“Well,” he continued, “I had two companions in my strange adventure ; you have seen a portrait of one ; let me show you a photograph of the other.”

Rummaging in his trunk, he drew forth a photograph, cabinet size, of a very queer-looking biped, which, on a close inspection, I saw was a large rooster. The curious thing about it, however, was that the fowl had been photographed in what an artist's model, perhaps, would term “the altogether” ; there was not a feather on it ! And yet it seemed alive, and stood with its neck stretched forward, its bare wings partly raised, and its bill open, as if in the act of crowing lustily.

I laughed heartily.

“You would not have been so merry,” the Professor said gravely, “if you had met him when I did. He was not then the swashbuckler that he appears in this photograph, which was taken a short while after the eventful day on which I fell in with him — the seventeenth day of June of the year eighteen hundred and eighty-two. Ah ! what Iowan can forget *that* day ?

“At that time I was living near Des Moines, and was deeply in love with the most beautiful girl that I have ever known, the original of the portrait that you found. Oh, you need not smile,

for I was then a good-looking, athletic fellow, of but twenty-five years. Well, for some reason my love-making didn't progress. Alice seemed to care for me, but her parents, though they showed no opposition, somehow always made it impossible for me to see her alone. It was as though they suspected my purpose and were determined that I should have no chance to speak to Alice of my real feelings.

"But I was as determined as they. So, when the professional aëronaut, Lugui—you remember the *furor* he created—came to town with his monster balloon, a scheme came into my head that I thought would enable me to be alone with Alice.

"Lugui had found it profitable to let the public take short rides in the air, the balloon being attached for this purpose by a rope several hundred feet long, to a windlass on the ground, worked by two strong men, who would allow the rope to unwind, and the daring passengers slowly to ascend.

"Now, my plan was simply to induce Alice to slip away and take a ride in the great air-ship with me, providing against the presence of other passengers by paying for the entire five seats."

"And the scheme succeeded?" I asked, as the Professor paused.

"Yes," he said gravely, "up to the moment when we began our ascent. But, just as the aëronaut's assistants had obeyed his signal, the balloon began to pitch like a ship in a storm, wrenched the handle of the windlass from the grasp of the men, and then—the earth bounded away in a succession of rapid leaps, like a jack-rabbit, and, before we could realize that the rope had snapped asunder like pack-thread, we were so far from land that the shouting of the excited multitude sounded to us like the slumbrous drone of insects.

"Well," I exclaimed, secretly glad that the parting of the rope had prolonged our companionship, 'this may prove a longer journey than we bargained for. Shall I pull the valve-line and descend? Not frightened, are you?'

"No," she answered, laughing; 'a little higher. This is glorious!'

"As for me, to be alone with her in these quiet regions was

heaven itself. Scarcely feeling the motion of our ship, up we glided through the blue silence till the earth, covered with a transparent mist like a veil of golden silk, began to assume a concave appearance; and, at last, our balloon, glowing like a golden planet, seemed to hang at the center of the visible universe. Below us lay the earth,—another sky,—its horizon looming up to meet the upper bowl of the heavens. Around us slept an ocean of blue, its serenity unbroken save towards the west, where masses of clouds softened the fierceness of the sun and threw a mellow radiance over all. Poised in mid-air, our balloon motionless except for a dreamy swaying to and fro, the deep silence unbroken save by the soft *Æolian* murmurs of the wind in the rigging, we dwelt in a world all our own. Hand clasped in hand, we gave ourselves up to blissful dreams.

“Suddenly there was a rush of warm air from below that sent our balloon careering through space. Dense mists gathered over the earth, and a shrill wind, tearing the mists into long streamers, drove them northward, where they banked themselves in a towering mass of gloom against the sky.

“Alice, overcome with terror, begged me to descend, but the valve-cord had become entangled with other parts of the rigging, and resisted all my efforts to let out the gas, which now swelled the balloon until it threatened to burst.

“I had read enough of the history of *aéronautics* to know that the explosion of a balloon in the upper air is not very dangerous, and tried to calm my dear girl's fears by explaining that in such cases the resistance of the atmosphere soon throws the envelope of the balloon into the form of a parachute, that breaks the force of the fall.

“But I was not given much time for theorizing. It had now grown so dark that we could scarcely see each other. As we cowered in the car, uncertain of what a second might bring forth, a ball of fire whizzed through the sooty darkness, illumining two peculiarly angry clouds that had made their appearance, one in the northwest and the other directly opposite in the southwest. Swaying and swelling for a moment, as if moved by the impulses of living beings, they rushed madly together and formed a single, olive-green, funnel-shaped cloud, that glowed in its upper part

with a weird light, and began to whirl and hum like some gigantic top. It was a tornado spout!

"At the same time the air around us was filled with so stifling a smell of sulphur that Alice fell fainting into my arms. Our quivering balloon again bounded upward, and there was a faint report like a distant pistol shot.

"I knew that the balloon had exploded, and braced my nerves for the terrible descent. Kneeling, I supported Alice with my left arm, and with my disengaged hand got a vice-like grip on the rim of the car. As we began to fall, the car swaying frightfully from side to side, I heard a hoarse, rumbling sound like that preceding an earthquake, and glanced westward. The tornado funnel, whirling round and round, and humming like a mill-wheel, casting an unearthly radiance far above it, zigzagging at times from side to side, and lashing its tail like some maddened leviathan, was rushing straight towards us! What occurred the next instant I heard rather than saw. A whir, as of mighty wings, a rattle, as of musketry, a bellowing, as of mad bulls,—and we dropped like a stone into the ghastly abyss.

"I hardly expect to convey any conception of my sensations. For the first second there was the sickening feeling that one has when dreaming of falling from a high cliff. But, instead of the awakening bump, I felt a galvanic-like shock, my hair and beard standing erect, a pricking as of needles over my face and neck, a painful light shooting through my eyeballs, and my whole body alternately tossing and stiffening, as if from strychnia poisoning.

"The next moment I was plunged into a delicious bath of cool vapor, the rapidity of the descent gradually lessening till at last the sense of falling ceased altogether, and the car began spinning in a jerky, pulsatory manner, but with incredible rapidity, round and round, as it appeared to me, in horizontal circles.

"All around me was a pitchy darkness, and from out that darkness came two sounds that God grant I may never hear again. One, a commingled roar and wail that seemed to burst upward from the bowels of the earth; the other, a continuous cutting, high-pitched, humming sound, for which earth affords no comparison, unless it were the noise that would be made by the simultaneous buzzing of innumerable circular saws. This humming,

never ceasing for a moment, and cutting through the fearful darkness, was inexpressibly horrible. Pitched high above the roar and wail that came from below, it jarred my very bones.

"To add to the horror of it all, Alice had slipped to the floor of the car, and my hands, feeling for her in the darkness, encountered a face cold as marble. As I strained my eyes to see her, a tiny shaft of light filtered down through the gloom above and fell upon her upturned face. It looked white as snow in the sickly ray. But her eyes were only partially closed, and for a moment my heart throbbed with joy as I fancied I could detect a tremulous movement of the blue-veined lids. Then the light went out like a snuffed candle, and left us again in the whirling, humming darkness. But only for an instant. Again it shone downward, and soon a dull, spectral glow lit up the gloom around us.

"What I now try to describe to you, I saw, of course, after my senses had somewhat recovered from their utter bewilderment. I found our car, on the rim of which the hoop had fallen with the wreck of rigging and silk still hanging to it, whirling, without visible means of support or propulsion, in the interior of an immense hollow, funnel-shaped cloud that was spinning round and round with such bewildering rapidity that I should not have known that it moved at all save for the fact that it revolved, not in a regular, continuous manner, like a top, but in a pulsatory, intermittent way, like the ratchet-wheel of a clock (except that the revolutions were from right to left), and caught up at intervals visible spirals of vapor that swirled from the central axis of the funnel and sometimes dashed over us in a fine spray.

"The upper portion of the funnel was filled, almost to the central axis, with a luminous mist, which was apparently in a state of rapid vibration, and through which could be dimly seen, floating on its upper surface, a phosphorescent disk of light, about the size of a dinner-plate, from which there radiated towards the outer wall of the funnel concentric rings of light that were continually shifting and wavering in their hues.

"Brain-sick as I was, from the incredible speed, and appalled by the deafening noises, I still had some confused idea that we were in a tornado cloud. But what supported us? The envelope of the balloon had long since been shredded by the fury of the blast.

“Glancing downward, I saw indistinctly numerous objects in the embrace of the whirl.

Once what looked like a large iron bridge was sucked up into the cloud for a short distance and, after floating for a few seconds, fell and disappeared. I believe I caught a glimpse of the earth as the lower part of the funnel ceased for a moment its furious lashings to and fro, and became partly cleared of the innumerable objects that were rushing pell-mell into its mouth.

“Suddenly the truth flashed upon me! It was the air itself that supported us! We were in the interior of an immense revolving flue, into which, as it traveled forward, powerful ascensional currents of air were indrawn at the earth below, and it was these upward spiral streams, howling and shrieking as they were sucked into the vortex, by which we were carried round and round like a leaf in a small dust storm. But, oh, with what fearful velocity! Looking back on that vertiginous flight, I can but smile at the calculations of meteorologists that in the most violent tornadoes the centripetal whirl of the wind has a velocity of eight hundred miles an hour!

“I now began to feel a singular buoyancy of spirits. I rapidly recalled miraculous escapes of persons struck by tornadoes, and recollected especially having read that, in the New Brunswick tornado of 1835, a lad had been carried upward and onward for a distance of a quarter of a mile, and afterwards deposited in safety. I remembered, too, that the spout which passed over Mount Carmel in 1877, and of which I myself had been an unwilling spectator, had carried bodily the spire of the Methodist church a distance of over fifteen miles. I was even seized by a transport of joy at the thought that I alone, of all men, had been permitted to ride on the very wings of the wind.

“But how soon that elation collapsed! Suddenly something whirling near us became entangled in the mass of cordage and silk hanging to the hoop. I got a grip on the thing and pulled it into the car. It was a rooster, entirely denuded of feathers, but still gasping with some sort of life! In spite of all, I could not help smiling at this unexpected visitor from the barnyard, and the picture of fear he presented as, with mouth agape, eyes protruding, and plumage gone, he lay quite still on the floor, occasionally sticking his head under his wing to shut out the horrid sights and sounds.

"A deathly chill crept over me. No mere wind, however violent, could divest a fowl of its feathers without killing it outright. But one agent in all nature could do it. I suddenly remembered my own sensations during the first sweep of my descent, and clapped my hands to my face and head; both were as free of hair as a new-born baby's! 'This rooster,' I then thought, 'has evidently been carried to the top of the funnel into that electric sea, which has stripped him of his plumage as it has me of my hair and beard. He has fallen again into the path of the tornado, and has been sucked up the second time into the vortex by the indrawn currents. *Is it possible for the same thing to happen to us?*'

"I now began rapidly to reflect upon what I had merely noticed before, that some of the objects that were sucked up would whirl past us and very suddenly shoot outwards through the walls of the funnel, while other and heavier objects would continue to circle below or sometimes fall back to earth. Plainly there was an altitude in the funnel where the ascending air-streams tended so strongly outwards from the center that the objects light enough to reach that altitude were hurled through the walls.

"We might ourselves reach that altitude, for the violence of the whirl was increasing, the humming noise growing shriller and shriller till it was elevated to the highest pitch of screaming. Suddenly something seemed to burst in my head—and all was silent. I looked up. The humming disk, the swirling spirals of vapor had not vanished, nor did it seem possible that such motion could exist apart from sound. There could be only one explanation. I had become wholly deaf!

"To add to the horror of the moment, I now discovered that our car was ascending. Instead of traveling horizontally in our circuits, it would shoot spirally upwards for a few feet, where it would make the circuit of the tunnel till another stronger current from below would whirl it up a few feet farther. Another moment and the funnel was lit up with an intense light. Again I glanced upwards. The disk that had hung at the top of the funnel was sinking towards us, and we were slowly rising to meet it!

"Like a bird before a basilisk, I gazed at the fiery disk.

Nearer and nearer it came, larger and larger it grew ! Swimming about in the mist, now fiercely luminous and shooting from side to side of the funnel, now of a dull and dying red, and slowly rotating on its axis, now blazing with intolerable glare as it gyrated wildly and dropped from its periphery crimson particles that splashed about in the mist like bits of molten metal, but ever sinking, sinking !

“Stone-deaf as I was, I could hear it splutter and hiss like red-hot iron plunged into water. I know not what power of action at length possessed me. I rose to my feet. I caught Alice up into my arms. Rather than pass through that hell of fire, I determined — ”

Here the story was abruptly broken off. As his narrative neared its crisis, the Professor had been laboring under intense excitement, and at this stage of the narrative he suddenly stopped, and there was a repetition of his singular actions on deck. His visage assuming an expression of the most abject terror, and his eyes dilating like the eyes of a cat in the dark, he thrust forward his head and inclined it as if in the act of intent listening. Remaining fixed in this posture for a few moments, there flashed forth from his eyes a fire so vivid that the very atmosphere in front of him appeared to be thrown into a tremulous luminosity. Then, trembling like a man about to have an attack of epilepsy, he threw up his hands with a convulsive motion and fell to the floor in a swoon.

I hastily summoned assistance. The ship's doctor took him in charge. His malady must have been a serious one, for he was confined to his stateroom the rest of the voyage. Though I made repeated efforts to visit him, the doctor's orders were peremptory that no one should see him. When we reached port the Professor was still ill. I have neither seen nor heard from him since.



My Invisible Friend.

BY KATHARINE KIP.



WHEN I first went to Mrs. Barker's boarding-house on Oak Street, I was greatly attracted by and interested in one boarder among the twelve. This was William Elliott, a tall, broad-shouldered man about thirty-five years old. During the day he was a bank cashier, while in his leisure hours he was an earnest and enthusiastic student of chemistry.

I had a hall bedroom on the fourth floor, while he occupied the large room next it, and had a good-sized closet fitted up as a laboratory.

Several nights during the late spring, when I had left my door open to create a draught, I had been forced to close it again because of the horrible odors from his vile chemicals that filled the hall. Once or twice I knocked on his door and complained, whereupon he immediately ceased his experiments for the evening. He told me, however, that the study was so fascinating that it was never out of his thoughts for an instant, and that his dream was to spend his whole life in the pursuit of it.

After awhile we became great friends, and soon it became my regular habit to go into his room each evening, and to sit there talking with him, or reading while he worked.

One night, about three months after the adoption of this program, Elliott was in a mood of unusual expansiveness. Instead of setting about work immediately in his laboratory, he drew up a chair near mine, sat down facing me, and looking at me seriously, said: —

"Look here, Emerson; I've taken a fancy to you, and I've a good mind to tell you what I'm trying for in all these experiments. You'll probably think me mad or a fool, but here goes: —

"You know what wonderful things can be done with the

Roëntgen rays? And you know they claim to be able to make glasses, by wearing which a surgeon can literally 'see through' his patients!

"Well, I say that somewhere in Nature, only waiting to be discovered, there is a certain something, by enveloping the human body in which, rays of light can pass directly through without obstacle; and which will therefore render the body absolutely invisible!"

He looked at me eagerly, his eyes bright, his face glowing.

"It sounds plausible," I said, but without enthusiasm, for the truth was that I had no idea what he meant, and regarded his schemes as little more than child's play.

"It is not only plausible, it is so," he answered, excitedly. "There is not in my mind the slightest doubt of the existence of that something, whatever it may prove to be. Its parts are about us somewhere — perhaps near at hand, only waiting for the right man to bring them together. And I intend to be that man! I know that it sounds like the wildest nonsense, the height of conceited assurance, to say so; — and yet, why *not* I?"

I hastened to assure him that there was no reason why he might not be the man, and I certainly meant it. I thought that he had just as good a chance as any other, but secretly I believed that no one could ever find that ridiculous "something."

Elliott talked to me of his work, his hopes, and struggles; and explained minutely many of his experiments, which were as Greek to me. It was midnight when I left his room.

"It's an expensive study," he said at last, with a half sigh. "My salary as cashier is a good one; and yet, here I am, on the top floor of a cheap boarding-house. I deny myself every luxury and many comforts, to buy the apparatus that I need, as well as the necessary books and pamphlets."

The next day I went away on my vacation, and three weeks passed before I returned to the boarding-house.

I had, however, received a postal from Elliott, two weeks after my departure, saying merely: —

"*Dear Emerson:* Am on the right track at last, I am sure.

"ELLIOTT."

I arrived at the house just at dinner-time, and, going directly

into the dining room, took my old seat at the table. Elliott came in a moment later and sat down opposite me. I was shocked at the change for the worse in his appearance. He looked thin, worn, and exhausted, while his eyes burned feverishly; but when he saw me his face brightened and he greeted me cordially.

He ate hardly anything, and, after taking a cup of black coffee, rose from the table.

"Come up to my den this evening, Emerson," he said as he passed out.

"Don't you think that Mr. Elliott looks terribly?" asked Mrs. Marvin, a pretty blonde. "The hot weather seems to have used him up completely; and I am sure he never sleeps, for he walks his room all night long. Mr. Marvin and I had the room under his, but we exchanged with Mr. Coleman and Mr. Gaines, and now are on the second floor. It really annoyed me so—the walking, you know—that I couldn't sleep."

I agreed with her that Elliott was looking badly, and secretly thought that the excitement of the chase bade fair to kill him, whether he were successful or not. Another half hour and I knocked at his door.

"Come in," he replied, in a high, strained voice. I opened the door and looked about me in surprise.

All the furniture had been pushed as far back in a corner as possible, while the center of the room was occupied by a small stone to which was fastened a long string.

"Shut the door!" he exclaimed. His cheeks burned with a hectic flush, and he glanced from me to the string, and back again. "Sit down—there, on the edge of the bed. That's it! Now look at this string. Do you see anything queer about it?"

I looked, and saw that it was jerked or blown about as if by the wind; and yet the doors and windows were closed. Then I thought my eyes must deceive me, for the string was pulled taut, *and jerked the stone about an inch!*

"Wh-what experiment is this, in Heaven's name?" I cried in amazement.

Elliott smiled triumphantly. "What do you see?" he asked.

"See? I *think* I see a string jerking a stone," I replied.

"Ah!" It was an exclamation of relief and delight.

He took a saucer from the mantelpiece, filled it with milk from a pitcher, and holding it in one hand, said : —

“ There happens to be a *cat* on the end of that string, my dear fellow, as I will demonstrate to you.”

At that a disagreeable suspicion stirred in my mind. A chill crept along my spine, and my eyes turned toward the door.

“ Don’t be afraid, I’m not dangerous,” he said, looking at me and smiling, as he placed the saucer on the floor. *The string moved toward it* ; and I swear I saw the ripples on that milk, and watched it gradually disappear, while at the same time I heard a distinct purring sound !

The strain on my nerves was a little too severe, and I burst into a hoarse laugh.

“ Ha, ha, ha ! — forgive me, but it seems too ridiculous, — a phantom cat drinking milk ! ”

Elliott smiled abstractedly, but I don’t think that he had heard a word that I said.

“ Do you know what this means ? ” he asked, in a low voice. “ It means a discovery as great as any that has ever been made. It means — Great Heavens, man ! you don’t know what it means, — that one could live his life in a crowded building, mix with hundreds of men, jostle them in the streets, eat with them, sleep with them, *murder* them, and never be seen by human vision ! ”

Elliott’s eyes glittered, he trembled all over, and breathed heavily. He began a rapid march up and down the room, while he continued to enlighten me as to the wonderful effect this discovery would have, in case it proved as successful with human beings as it had with the invisible feline. I occupied as small a space as possible, for, in spite of his reassuring words of a short time before, I was afraid of him. I also tried to look enthusiastic and encouraging, but the effort was probably vain, for he suddenly stopped in his walk and said : —

“ Here ! get down and feel where that cat is.”

I obeyed with alacrity, although I expected to find nothing, and was rewarded, as my fingers closed on something soft and furry, by hearing a maddened “ *miaouw*,” and by receiving a most realistic scratch from invisible claws.

“ Damn it ! ” I exclaimed vigorously ; and somehow, after that,

the ghostly aspect of the whole affair was lost to me. "What on earth possessed you to tie the cat with a string?" I asked, nursing my injured hand.

"My dear fellow, will you tell me how I could locate her otherwise? You can't see the cat, which is carefully covered with — with the result of my experiments; and you *can* see the string, which has not been treated."

I stared at him in amazement. Somehow that simple idea had not occurred to me.

"Why, then you *really* would be as invisible as air!" I exclaimed fatuously.

"Didn't I say so? Heavens, shall I take the stone to pound the idea into your head?" — in a vexed tone.

"No; I'll dispense with that crowning argument. You must remember that while you have had months to grow used to the idea, *I* have had it sprung on me with comparative suddenness. And it *is* a hard thing to credit! Even now —"

"Wait a minute!" he interrupted, his good humor restored. "I'll convince you." He stepped to the laboratory and brought out a small dish filled with a lead-colored liquid. He pulled the string toward him, and his fingers closed on the air, as far as I could see. He held his hand over the dish and thrust it downward. There was a wild mewing and spitting, a grand splash, and then — I saw before me a cat, wet and bedraggled, and with the string tied around her neck!

"And now," he said, after enjoying my astonishment for a while; "you can dig out, old fellow, and I'll get some sleep. I'll let you know when I'm ready for the next test. I want to try it on *myself* next, and it will take two weeks of hard work to make the necessary quantity."

I am not ashamed now to confess that, after that night's experience, when the great nature of the discovery had gradually dawned on me, I grew as nervous as any old woman. I started at the slightest sound; I never sat with my back to a door, and was never really satisfied unless I had Elliott within range of my vision. I saw him only at the table, for he told me that until two weeks had elapsed, and he had prepared for the great test, he didn't want me in his room.

I placed no reliance on what he had said, however, about the length of time required to prepare for it, but feared that he might at any time anoint himself with the mysterious compound and take me by surprise. For I was the only human being who knew of the discovery, and my terror showed to me, though my mind tried to deny, how thoroughly I believed in it.

Each night, after going to my room, I locked and bolted the door, and then gave the small room a thorough search. I poked under the bed and in the wardrobe with a cane; I stood in the middle of the floor and jabbed all around, quickly and scientifically. I had complained before because the place was so tiny; now it seemed too large for me.

I understood thoroughly and sympathized with the nervous fears of those who believe in ghosts; and how much more reason had I to dread a "ha'nt" who, thin as he was, must weigh one hundred and seventy pounds, and who was possessed of the strength of a man mastered by one idea.

But one night, after two weeks of anxiety, Elliott stopped me in the hall after dinner, and said:—

"Come to my room to-night at nine. I'm ready for the great test."

The man looked positively wild. There were great hollows around his eyes, his cheeks were sunken, his hands like claws. I verily believe he had scarcely slept or eaten in a fortnight. He had, however, consumed enormous quantities of black coffee.

Well, I sat with Coleman and Gaines in their room until nine o'clock. Overhead I could hear Elliott's steady, rapid walk.

"Just hear that!" exclaimed Gaines. "I believe the fellow's cracked. Luckily Coleman and I have steady nerves, or that noise, kept up night after night, would drive us crazy."

At nine I left them and knocked at his door. He opened it quickly, then closed and locked it after me.

Everywhere was dust and disorder. The bed had been removed and had been replaced by a couch, over which was thrown a rug.

He waved his hand toward it. "Don't need a maid to make it up each morning," he said briefly. "Can't have a woman fooling around and upsetting things."

On a table near the couch was an immense glass jar, such as

grocers use in their shop windows to display samples of preserves. It was about a foot in diameter and over two feet in height, and was tightly sealed. It was a faint yellow in color, but I could not then decide whether it was colored by the contents or not. Beside the table on the floor was a large porcelain tub, filled with the lead-colored liquid that I had seen before.

"There is my discovery," Elliott said, in a hushed voice, pointing to the jar. "And that," indicating the liquid in the tub, "you have seen before."

"To-morrow, if all goes well, the whole world will know of the great discovery. Think what it will mean! A man might travel the world over, unseen, unknown. He could penetrate the secrets of all lives. I dread to let the world share the knowledge with me, and yet it is too great to hide!"

Then, abruptly: "To-night I propose to make myself as invisible as that cat was. And I have asked you to be here, in case anything should go wrong, and I were to need help."

I sat spellbound in my chair, without the strength to speak. Elliott advanced to the table. He moistened his lips nervously, and his hands shook so that he could hardly grasp the jar. I saw, however, by the way he lifted it, that it was very light.

"My nerve is almost gone," he said, with a haggard smile. "Now I'll prepare myself in the laboratory, — while you wait here."

I sat there as he had directed, scarcely moving. My eyes were glued to the closed door of the laboratory. I could feel the hair rising on my scalp, and the chills running up and down my spine.

At last — whether in ten minutes or an hour, I do not know — the door was flung open. With a hoarse cry, I started to my feet, and retreated to the wall, holding my hands out to ward off — what? For, although a light burned in the laboratory, and I could see plainly around the little room, there was no one there!

"Quick! tell me, Emerson," exclaimed Elliott's strained voice *somewhere* in the room near me, "can you see me? Great Heavens, — you know what it means to me, man! Can't you speak — are you dumb?" The voice sounded nearer and threatening.

"No — no!" I fairly yelled, finding my voice suddenly, "I see no one. For God's sake, don't touch me, or I'll go mad."

A moment's pause, then the voice relaxed, and gently, and with a little happy laugh, murmured: —

"Don't be childish, Emerson! You know I'm *here*, don't you? Not only in voice, but in flesh. Why should you 'go mad' over your inability to see me, any more than because you can't see a friend when you can hear him through a telephone?"

Though a trifle reassured, I still shook with dread, and Elliott said good-humoredly: —

"Come here! Oh, I forgot," — with a really boyish laugh, — "you don't know where 'here' is! Well, I warn you. I'm coming to you, and to shake your hand," and I heard footsteps cross the floor, and felt the hearty grasp of his hand on mine.

"There — run your hand up my arm! It has the regular 'feel' of flesh, hasn't it?"

I admitted that it had. "And you really can see *no one*? Every article of furniture is as plain as if you were alone? Now I am between you and the laboratory door. How is it?"

"I see the laboratory, the light in it, the empty jar, and everything else, distinctly."

"Good! — but I *knew* that I must succeed!" and there was fairly a sob in his voice. Then, with a quick change, he asked gaily: —

"What do you think I intend to do now? I will enjoy myself like a schoolboy, for to-morrow I must be only a scientist. I will take a trip — go on a journey of exploration and adventure — through the house, and perhaps venture into the street."

"O Elliott, don't do that! — think of the risk! You've stood the test so far; just wash the stuff off now, go to bed and take some rest!"

"Nonsense!" — irritably. "As for risk, where is it? You're afraid of me, that's what's the matter!" This with a disagreeable laugh. "No, I intend to enjoy myself. The warm weather renders my lack of raiment very comfortable. Now, I'll say 'auf wiedersehen,' Emerson."

Unable to persuade him to abandon his plan, and, I admit, too cowardly, and too much overcome with the events of the past few

moments, to say more, I sat in my chair, stupid with fright. The key turned in the lock, the door opened and closed, and I heard on the stairway the familiar creak of the third stair from the top.

Elliott had really gone !

Then, indeed, I regained my senses. Bounding from my seat, I rushed to the door, flung it open, and leaned over the banisters. The gas in the hall was burning low. Inspired by fright, I turned it on at full head, then resumed my position of leaning over the railing. All was quiet in the halls below. Suddenly the light in the second hall went out. Elliott was there, then ! Perhaps he intended to play some trick on Coleman and Gaines ; — no, they now had the room under Elliott's, and the Marvins had the second floor front.

"Well, he'll find it out as soon as he opens the door ; and *they* can't see *him*," I murmured, realizing more than ever the advantages of invisibility.

A streak of light in the darkness of the second hall appeared and vanished.

"Their door opening and shutting," I decided.

There was complete silence for about five minutes. Then I heard a woman's scream, followed, after a slight pause, by another, and another, two pistol-shots, and the slamming of a door. I was rooted to the spot with fright and horror. The whole place seemed whirling around me, and I grasped at the railing to steady myself.

At the sound of the first scream, a door on the third hall had opened, and Gaines and Coleman had rushed for the stairway. Before they could reach it, the pistol-shots rang out, the door in the second hall slammed ; and as Gaines placed his hand on the stair rail he paused, staggered, and fell heavily against the wall. Coleman, too, fell back ; and then — then I heard the well-known creak of the stair near me — and the door of Elliott's room closed softly, and I heard the key turn in the lock.

With that sound, I was seized with a dread of being alone on the same floor with the madman ; for such I now had fully decided him to be. I fled precipitately down the stairs, and reached the second hall almost simultaneously with Coleman and Gaines. We burst into the Marvins' room together.

There was only a dim lamplight in the room. Mrs. Marvin lay back on a couch, unconscious. Over her, the revolver in his hand and a look of frantic terror on his face, bent her husband. When he entered, he turned and looked wildly at us.

"Did you see any one — anything in the halls?" he demanded.

"No," answered Coleman and Gaines together. I shook my head.

"What was all the shooting about?" asked Coleman suspiciously, "and why did Mrs. Marvin scream? Is she shot?"

"Shot? No!" replied Mr. Marvin, who had by this time laid down the pistol. "I — I thought there was a burglar shot," and he turned again to his wife and began checking her hands.

By this time Mrs. Barker and the other boarders, all less in disarray, and all very much excited, were grouped about the door.

Mrs. Barker entered, and added her efforts to Mr. Marvin's. and in a few minutes we had the satisfaction of seeing Marvin's eyes open.

Every one was clamoring for some explanation of the noise and the shots; and in a short time we were in possession of the truth to which I listened with feelings of guilt and shame.

"Just before the disturbance Mr. and Mrs. Marvin were sitting by a table reading. The gas was lighted in the central chamber and a lamp was burning on the table. The couple were sitting with their backs to the door, which was unlocked.

"Suddenly Mrs. Marvin was startled by hearing the door open. She turned just in time to see it close again, and noticed that the hall was dark.

" 'Frank,' she exclaimed, 'some one opened the door and closed it again!'

" 'Nonsense — the draught,' he replied, and continued reading.

"In another instant she noticed the light growing dim. Looking up she saw that the gaslight was going out. At that time she *felt* the presence of some stranger in the room, but she could see no one. She uttered an exclamation of alarm.

" 'My dear Alice, what is it?' asked Mr. Marvin resolutely. (He was deeply interested in his book.)

“‘Frank, the gas is going out — has *gone* out; and I feel that there is some one in the room. O Frank! I am so frightened — oh!’” She stepped quickly toward her husband, and it was then that she uttered that first scream; for as she moved, she came into contact with some one — or something — although there was seemingly no one there.

“‘By Heaven, there is something!’ exclaimed her husband, as he, too, encountered the mysterious presence.

“Scream after scream issued from Mrs. Marvin’s lips, and Mr. Marvin, utterly losing his head, rushed to the bureau, took out his revolver, and fired twice; as much to alarm the house, in his insane terror, as with the hope of hitting — hitting what? With a bewildered air, he acknowledged that he had seen no one.

“‘And yet,’ he said, ‘when I fired the first shot, the door opened again, and I just had time to fire the second shot at the opening before it closed.’”

That ended Marvin’s story. Marvin, himself, acted as if he did not expect to be believed. His listeners, for the most part, evidently thought that he had been under the influence of liquor. Mrs. Barker sniffed contemptuously, and said she only *hoped* the pistol-shots hadn’t damaged the woodwork. One man even said consolingly: —

“You’ll sleep it off, old fellow,” while Mrs. Marvin wept hysterically.

But Coleman said slowly: —

“Well, it’s deuced queer; but when I heard Mrs. Marvin scream, and started for the stairs, I had just reached them, when I got an awful shove that knocked me clean over against the wall. Yet I’ll take my oath no one was there. And I hadn’t had a drop to drink, either,” with a fierce glare around.

Gaines listened open-mouthed.

“That was my experience to a T,” he exclaimed. “I thought sure I ‘had ’em.’ Now *what* was it? I say, Emerson, did *you* see any one, or hear any one?”

“N-no,” I replied articulating with difficulty, “n-nothing.”

“Well, you’ve got a good case of rattles, anyhow,” he said, laughing.

A few minutes more and the group had separated, Mrs. Mar-

vin, tearful and still badly frightened, vowing that she would stay up all night and leave in the morning; Marvin, pale and but a trifle shame-faced; Coleman and Gaines puzzled and angry; Mrs. Barker and others openly contemptuous; colored servants whispering of "ha'nts" and looking alarmed with fright.

I climbed slowly up to my room. No one had noticed my absence. I was thankful for that. I felt somehow like a conspirator. Should I go in and speak to him — ask him for explanations of the affair, though I was sure how it had happened?

No. I decided that what I needed was rest from Elliott. I went cautiously into my own room, fearing to hear him call me. All was silent, however, and after going through my usual routine of search, I prepared for bed and was soon sound asleep.

The next morning, as I was dressing and reviewing the events of the evening before, the thought occurred to me for the first time that Elliott might have been wounded by one of the shots fired by Marvin. At this idea, I hurriedly opened my door and pounded on Elliott's. There was no reply.

"I knocked and knocked, Mr. Emerson," said the chambermaid who was passing, "and I couldn't wake him."

"Go down and ask Mr. Coleman if he's heard Mr. Elliott walking around this morning."

In a moment she was back.

"No, sir."

"I — I'm certain he's ill," I said. My mind was dwelling on those shots. "Go and tell Mrs. Barker that we must force the door. Get James." James was the man-of-all-work.

Mrs. Barker came hurrying up, looking pale and worried.

"James is coming right up," she said; "but do you think it's best to force the door?"

"I think Mr. Elliott must be ill. We can't make him wait, and delay is dangerous, you know."

"Yes, I know. It never rains but it pours, sir; and with Mr. and Mrs. Marvin going at daybreak, and now *this*! I don't know what to do," and her eyes filled with tears.

James appeared at that moment, and the group was

swelled by Coleman. James put his shoulder to the door, and quickly forced it open.

As it swung in we all started back in horror, for there, lying half in and half out of the porcelain tub, was the body of Elliott! His head was leaning back against the couch, his face was distorted, his hands clenched.

The physician who was hastily summoned said that life had been extinct for many hours.

"Chronic heart disease," he said. "The attack was probably brought on by some great excitement."

So it was not a bullet wound, after all! And I had a very decided idea as to what the "great excitement" was that had brought on the fatal attack of heart trouble. I did not make that idea public, however, and Coleman's theory, which differed very materially from mine, was generally accepted as true.

"It was the noise of all that screaming and of those shots that brought on the attack," said he. And it certainly sounded plausible enough.

No trace of the great discovery was left. I did venture to tell the relative who inherited all of Elliott's belongings that I had reason to believe that his cousin had made a very important discovery just before he died. I therefore urged upon him the advisability of having his papers examined by a competent person. But I learned that only a few disconnected notes, of no value whatsoever, had been found.

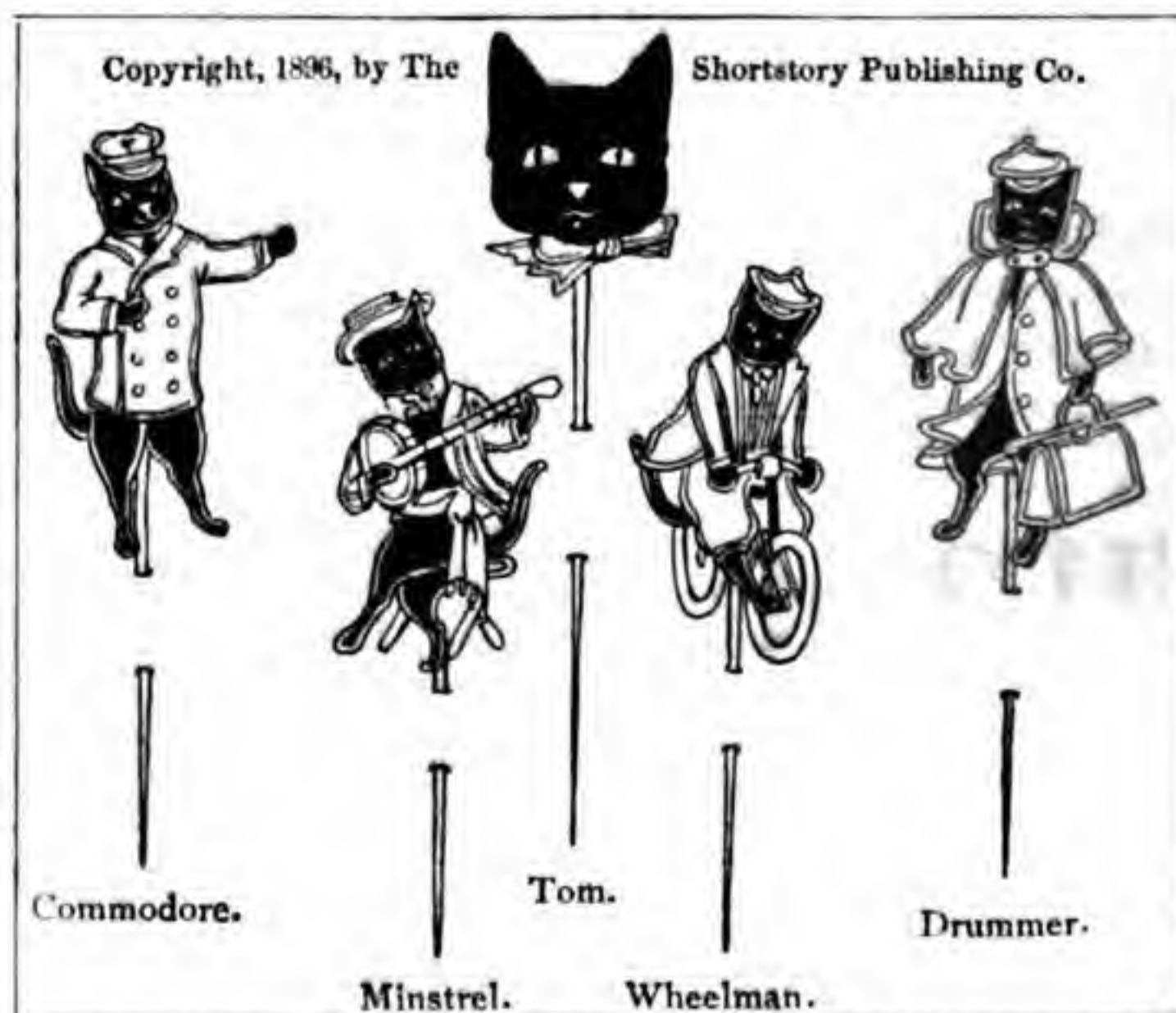
However, what one man has done another can do. And I confidently expect, and at no very distant time, to learn that Elliott's experiment has been made again, and has succeeded.



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Tunnel Number Six.

BY EUGENE C. DERBY.



EXTENDING for thousands of feet beneath the earth's surface, joined by a vast labyrinth of tunnels and leads, the great iron mines of Maitland, New South Wales, still yield their riches to the hardy toilers with sledge and bar, just as they have done for scores of years already past and probably will continue to do for centuries to come.

Yet deep down in that mammoth excavation there is a vein of the richest magnetic iron ore, where the miners never strike a blow and where visitors are rarely shown. This remarkable lead is locally designed as The Haunted Vein,—why and with what appropriateness may be judged from the following bit of history, which has never before appeared in print.

Early in the spring of 1893, a miner who was toiling alone at the farthest extremity of this big vein was suddenly startled by hearing the cry of a human voice, coming, apparently, from beyond the very wall which formed the end of the lead. The man uttered an answering cry and, with his heavy sledge poised in air, listened for a repetition of the thrilling sound.

“Surely I must have been mistaken,” he mused, as he again lifted the ponderous hammer, but the next instant the steel sledge fell clattering to the rocky floor, as a distinctly audible cry pealed up from the jet black face of the far-reaching wall of ore:—

“Help! Help!”

“God above us,” gasped the startled man, “there’s some one entombed here,” and, turning, he sprang away to give the alarm at the main shaft.

The boss foreman, with a gang in charge, happened to be descending in a big cage just as Miner Chessman appeared, and the excited man called upon them to stop.

"There's somebody buried alive at the end of the six-foot lead!" he panted; "come and help me rescue him," and before his startled superior could question him, Chessman turned and darted back toward the tunnel, his miner's lamp twinkling and dancing like a miniature star through the inky darkness.

The foreman rushed in pursuit with six strong men, eager for the rescue. At the end of the long excavation they found Chessman kneeling, his ear pressed firmly against the solid wall of iron ore, and his hand raised in a warning gesture of silence.

"He is there; right beyond the big column!" breathlessly declared the miner, as he seized his sledge once again, preparatory to beginning operations. But at this point the puzzled foreman stepped forward and laid his hand firmly upon Chessman's arm.

"What do you mean?" he slowly articulated, at the same time looking the trembling individual thus addressed squarely in the face, while the rescue party crowded around them. The big miner turned a wild, startled look upon his interrogator.

"Great God, man!" he gasped, and his breath sounded like the hiss of escaping steam, "you heard it — the cry for help?"

The foreman slowly shook his head. "No, I did not hear a cry, and furthermore, Chessman, the very suggestion is absurd. There is absolutely nothing there save a vein of solid iron ore, which extends for many feet beneath the ocean."

"But I tell you I heard a cry!" expostulated the miner. "Perhaps only a few inches separate us from some other lead."

His manner proclaimed the sincerity of his words, but Foreman Gouchy dubiously shook his head.

"I do not propose to argue the question with you," he answered. "You may have thought that you heard a cry, but I assure you that no living thing exists beyond that wall of ore, for there is no tunnel, lead, or shaft in that direction, as the sea is but a short distance above and beyond you; and, furthermore, a man's voice could never reach you through even eight inches of that solid mineral barrier."

A look of deep reproach filled big Tom Chessman's eyes, plainly showing how keenly he felt the insinuation of his superior. He turned without a word, and had raised his big sledge to resume his labor upon the rocky wall when the signal for "knocking

off " came, and, without so much as looking at any member of the party, Tom dropped his " mash " and started down the level toward the main shaft. His car, nearly filled with sparkling fragments of ore, stood upon the track which led to the main level, and it waited only the touch of a hand upon the brakes to release it and send it down the incline. Whether it was by accident or design that Tom released the brake-lever as he passed the car will never be positively known, but just as Chessman stepped in front of it the heavy load started, and the next moment the big man was stretched prone beneath the low-lying axle.

At once Mark Gouchy and his helpers sprang to Chessman's assistance. The heavy trucks were quickly pried up, while ready hands relieved the car of its burden of ore. But brave Tom was taken out unconscious, with a terrible gash across his temple, and for three days lay raging in wildest delirium.

" Help ! Help ! " he cried incessantly. And then : " I can hear the cry, Gouchy. A man is entombed beyond that wall."

Foreman Gouchy remained obdurate, however, and the six-foot lead was assigned to another miner.

Tim O'Connor had been working assiduously for several hours at the extremity of the vein, and had paused for a drink of water from a tin can near at hand, when he suddenly started, with the can half raised to his lips, and his eyes became riveted upon the black and glistening face of the ore wall. The Irishman's heart fairly missed a couple of beats, and a chill like ice crept up his spine ; then, with a cry of alarm, he dropped the tin and dashed at breakneck speed down the level, while the echo of a human groan caused the air to tremble and vibrate for several seconds.

" Howly Mither," he gasped, " it's a ghost ! " and he never stopped running until he had reached the toll-boy's shanty at the main shaft.

" Number Six is ha'nted ! " he sputtered, and then, as the empty cage appeared, going up, Tim jumped on board, and has never since been seen in the vicinity of the big mine.

However, this sensational incident led to an investigation. The next morning two reliable men were stationed at the farthest extremity of the big lead, with instructions to ascertain, if possible, the occasion for all this alarm. For an entire day they waited,

listening in vain for some sound which should furnish a clew to the mystery. But none came, until, just previous to the hour when the "day shift" was about to quit work, one of the watchers suddenly raised his hand with a warning gesture.

Both men listened, and each distinctly heard a clicking sound, as of some one beyond the barrier picking at the iron. Then came a faint moan of bitter distress, followed by the distinctly audible sounds of a human voice, calling in agonized appeal:—

"Help! Help! God save me or I shall perish."

This cry was immediately followed by a sickening groan, as though the suffering victim had exhausted every energy in making this final call for aid. Then all became silent as the grave.

Immediately the two miners awoke to a realization of the fact that something must be done, and that, too, without delay.

"Go for help," cried one, as he seized his sledge, and, while that maddening echo still vibrated in his ears, he swung the ponderous hammer against the unyielding barrier. The result was amazing, for, while the sledge was raised for still another blow, the most indescribable sound came back to him, telling of agony and hope, blended in one short, tense wail of thankfulness.

Then, while his companion rushed for the outer shaft to spread the alarm, this sturdy miner toiled as he had never toiled before. Blow after blow fell in quick succession, the crushing force of each bringing a shattered segment of ore to the floor, until the man's lithe body was fairly reeking with perspiration and his supple muscles tingled with the violence of his exertion. Over a quarter of an hour had gone ere the sinews of steel began to show signs of relaxing, and for the first time Neil Maxam, panting for breath, drew his horny fingers across his sweat-bathed forehead, and, leaning upon the handle of his sledge, strained his ears to catch the sound of approaching footsteps.

Where was the relief party? Surely it was time for help to arrive!

Then he looked at the fragments of glistening ore that were heaped about him as a result of his labors, and, with a glad cry, he sprang to his task again just as a score of flickering lamps turned a corner of the lead one hundred feet away.

The rescue party was at hand!

Six months later four men might have been seen descending into the big iron mine of Maitland, led by the superintendent, and each bearing the section of some scientific instrument by which an investigation was to be made — for the mystery of the six-foot lead had not yet been solved.

The rescue party had worked incessantly for four days and nights, when it had been discovered that the long tunnel was approaching an end, underneath the waters of Illawarra coast, and though the ore found here was of a quality superior to that in any other portion of the mine, it became necessary to stop work, as the mine was in danger of being flooded and lost.

In any event, it was generally believed that further attempts at rescue would be unavailing, as the result would be reached too late. Thus the effort to find the author of that mysterious cry had been abandoned for several months when an inspector of mines, visiting the far end of Number Six, was startled by again hearing that plaintive cry for help.

As before, it appeared to come directly from the solid wall of ore. What was to be done? There was no disputing the sound. It was certainly the cry of a man, and that man was entombed somewhere beyond that rocky barrier. The inspector considered it his imperative duty to find out just where the prisoner was confined, and he set to work at once to carry that project into effect.

But the mine owners knew full well that but a very thin partition shut out the waters of the bay, and that further excavation at the end of the vein would speedily bring disaster upon them. Here was a puzzle indeed. The call for help could be heard at frequent intervals, coming from the very direction in which it appeared least possible for a human being to exist. In sheer desperation they finally called upon an aged scientist of Sydney, hoping that he might be able to advance some explanation.

The old professor came — he heard the cry — he pondered long and departed. Nothing was gained by his visit. The result of his investigations was expressed only by sundry shakings of his hoary head.

Later two gentlemen from an Australian university put in appearance. They, too, listened to the strange voice. They tapped upon the wall. They sounded with hammers, and they

took a series of measurements calculated to show their familiarity with the problem of reflected sound. Then they asked innumerable questions and — they, too, finally departed, having acknowledged to the management their inability to cope with the mystery.

But now there had appeared with their assistants two celebrated professors, one English and one German, who had been dispatched by their respective universities to make exhaustive study of The Haunted Vein, the remarkable history of which had been reported to them. These grave men came fully determined to fathom the secret of the Maitland mine or to spend the remainder of their days there in investigation.

When first they listened to the voice they, like their predecessors, declared that it came from beyond the barrier of ore.

“There is surely a very slight vibration near the face of the wall,” proclaimed the German professor, who, in anticipation of the cry, had carefully arranged a very sensitive diaphragm close to the point from which the call had appeared to come.

They likewise took numerous measurements to satisfy themselves that the superintendent had been correct in asserting their proximity to the sea; they listened to that oft-repeated cry, and at last concluded that the sounds came from an entirely different source than was supposed. In other words, they explained to the superintendent that there was evidently some person imprisoned in a distant portion of the mine, whose voice was taken up and transmitted in some mysterious manner, through the vast system of tunnels and leads, to the point where it was finally echoed from the face of the wall; or that possibly some laborer or other person within the mine was victimizing them, by uttering at frequent intervals these cries, which were transmitted hence in like manner.

It was determined to test this theory with extreme care, and the officials caused every man to be withdrawn from the great excavation until the learned professors should have time to try still another experiment in support of this idea. A series of elaborate calculations followed. Every theory known to modern science for the measurement of repeated sound was advanced. And yet without success!

That call came once again, clear and distinct as before, at the

face of the wall where it had ever been heard, but at no other point was it distinguished by either of the scientists.

“Help! Help! Save me or I shall die!”

It was the distinctly articulated tone of a man's voice, pitched in that exhausted treble which clearly denoted the agony of the sufferer. Following it came a clicking sound, as of the contact of iron with iron, and both the venerable scientists speedily reverted to their original conclusion — that the cry did come from a suffering captive, and that the unknown was somewhere beyond that wall of impenetrable iron ore. But where?

In vain they arranged scientific instruments; they listened to the voice, they pondered over theories of heat, electric forces, and transmitted sound. After a fortnight of tireless application they realized that they must soon acknowledge to an expectant world the chagrin of their own defeat. This was indeed a mystery! But the Englishman was determined never to yield so long as there was a possibility of success. He arranged a very sensitive phonographic apparatus near the face of the wall, so as to catch the faintest sounds, and with extreme patience he waited for the cry. It came at last: —

“Help! Help!”

The scientist threw his electrical apparatus into action and bent forward to listen to the faintly articulated words. He was standing thus, his companions near at hand, when he was observed to throw up his arm as if to enjoin silence, and then his face became flushed with excitement as he heard the cry: —

“Thank God, you have come at last!”

Then there followed a confused murmur of voices, while a gleam of light flashed from the English professor's eye.

He had discovered the key to the mystery.

“This magnetic iron ore is but a natural telephone!” cried Professor Blake, his face beaming with satisfaction. “We have been listening to the cry of some prisoner who was doubtless confined where the natural conditions served as a perfect transmitter of sound. The vein of iron ore has been the conductor, and we have listened to a message that doubtless has passed through many miles of magnetite — perhaps, indeed, the sounds have come from the distant mines of Siberia —”

The German professor started.

"Somewhere I have read," he exclaimed, brightening, "that to the north of the great Ural Mountains in Russia, in the bleak Obdorsk region, there exists a valuable mine of superior magnetite, where prisoners are often confined by the order of the Czar. As these great veins of lodestone trend north and south, and as that section of Russia is almost due north of us, it is not at all improbable that your theory is the correct one."

Howbeit, the cries ceased from that hour. The sounds reproduced from Professor Blake's phonographic cylinder revealed another voice than that of the supposed prisoner. The dialect plainly identified the speaker as being either a Russian or a Pole.

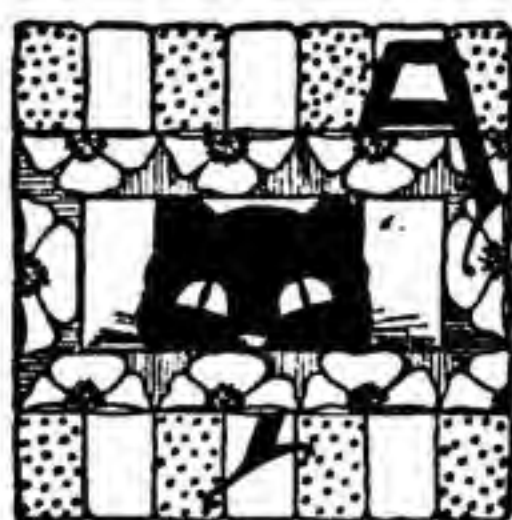
To-day, three years later, the two great universities have just completed their investigations. After an exhaustive search it was learned that an American, suspected of being implicated in a political revolt, had been confined in a cell in the great magnetite mine near Serka, that he had constantly called for help during his period of imprisonment, and that at last he had been released through the efforts of a Polish nobleman named Zaluski, who came to his cell and rescued him upon the very day and hour that the English professor had made his remarkable discovery.

The superstition of the average miner, however, is proverbial. In spite of the scientists the voices which sometimes echo faintly through deserted Number Six preclude any intrusion by these sturdy toilers upon the solitudes of The Haunted Vein.



Information Wanted.

BY PERCIE W. HART.

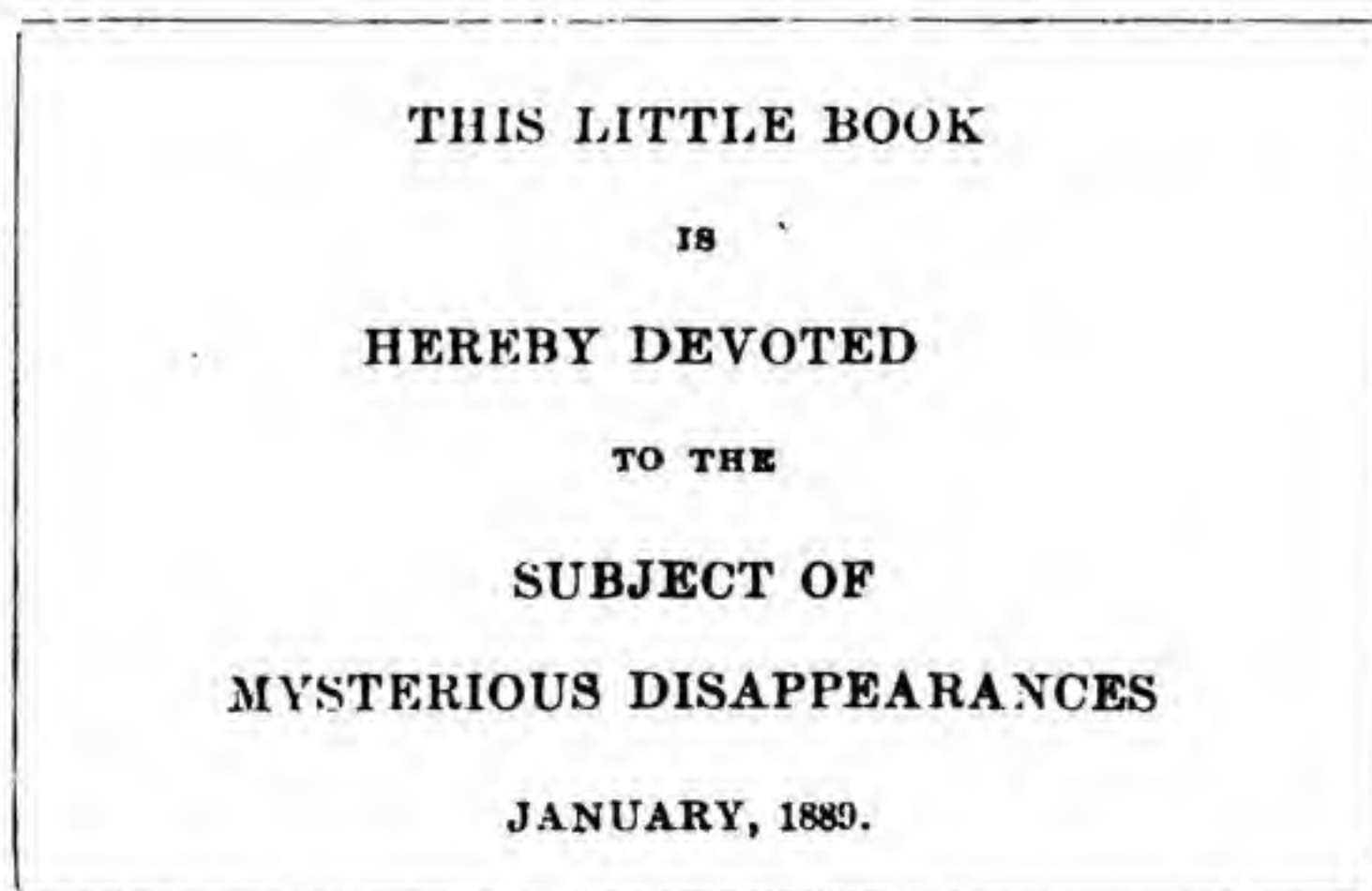


S some people feel themselves imposed upon by a story that ends in an interrogation point, I wish to state at the outset that this narrative deals with an unsolved mystery. My only excuse for publishing the facts here given is my conviction that among seventy millions of Americans there must be one who can supply the missing links. I therefore take the public into my confidence, with the hope of securing the cooperation of thousands of active intellects in aiding me to work out the complete solution of a surprising social anomaly.

I reside at 527 Riverside Avenue, in the busy manufacturing city of Newark, N. J. As I came out of my front door on the morning of the sixteenth day of November, 1895, some few minutes before the seven o'clock factory whistles blew, my dog came bounding towards me, carrying the remains of a small paper kite in his mouth. As I bent over to pat him on the head, I noticed that the tail of the kite was constructed from pieces of paper that had been written upon. Carelessly detaching one of these pieces, and glancing over it with a sort of mild curiosity, I became deeply interested, and eagerly secured the remainder.

These crumpled sheets were all of about the same size, and appeared to have been torn from an ordinary pocket memorandum book. The handwriting was that of a thoroughly methodical man, and the pages being numbered at the corners, it was merely the work of a few moments to arrange them in their proper sequence. To my surprise and delight, not a single number was missing, and I give their contents herewith, without change or comment. As the matter is continuous I have dispensed with quotation marks, these being unnecessary to distinguish the diary from my own narrative.

The first page, numbered three, however, may be likened to a title-page, and bears the following descriptive wording in a small neat script : —



The matter then continues uninterruptedly in the form of a diary, as follows : —

Jan. 3, 1889. It seems almost absurd for me to enter into a full explanation of my purposes in beginning this little book, as it is scarcely probable that any one but myself will ever read it. But parental example as well as inherited traits of character have conduced to make me systematic in all my undertakings, great or small. I have therefore set aside this small volume for the sole purpose of recording anything that would help to explain the unaccountable disappearances from time to time of men occupying good social position, and possessed of liberal wealth.

Some few short months ago I should probably have laughed at anybody who would have ventured to suggest that there was any such mystery ; but the fact of my becoming a directly interested party has caused me to realize the magnitude and possibilities of my subject. Nay, more ; if any one would but take occasion to note the number of such disappearances chronicled by his favorite newspaper in the course of a twelvemonth, one would be apt to realize the importance of the subject, and wonder at the singular apathy of the general public in regard to it.

The reason for my becoming a specially interested party may as well be stated at once. *My own father has thus disappeared !* As he was a man of ample fortune, free from any special business

cares, in vigorous bodily health, without any taint of inherited insanity, and scarcely past threescore years, the theory of suicide — aside from the non-discovery of the body — is wholly irrational.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, the 26th day of October, 1888, he left his house for the purpose of looking after the wants of a tenant. He never returned, never called upon the lessee, and his disappearance was as absolutely and mysteriously accomplished as if he had been instantly converted into nothingness. The fact of our being on a more or less secluded street may account for his passing down the block unnoticed, but it is truly remarkable that after he went out of the front gate, no one can be found who remembers seeing him anywhere. With his wide acquaintance, distinctive dress, and commanding appearance, he was not one likely to pass unnoticed. Yet, in spite of liberal rewards, and the very best detective skill in the country, not the faintest sign of a clue can be discovered.

My father had been especially hearty and cordial in his family relations during the few weeks preceding the catastrophe, and in spite of my better judgment my mind is filled with inexpressible fears and vague forebodings. I have no close friend for a confidant, and even if I had, should be very much puzzled in regard to enlisting his aid or sympathy, for the reason that I have absolutely nothing material to confide.

January 8. In looking over the documents and books pertaining to my father's estate, I find that everything is in perfect order, some future contingencies even being provided for. If it were not for my own knowledge of my father's extremely systematic ways, I should be forced to the conclusion that he had arranged his affairs in the expectation of just such an event as has occurred.

January 17. The *Boston Star* contains an account of a disappearance case. It is really remarkable what a small item they have made of it, but I presume that the general public cares little to read about a mystery not yet unveiled.

A well-known banker and gold broker, John C. Boerum, senior partner of the firm of Boerum & Updyke, with offices in the Dorchester Building, on Tremont Street, leaves his place of busi-

ness at half past two in the afternoon of the tenth instant, with the announced intention of proceeding to his home in Brookline. The elevator boy remembers that, as was his usual custom, he turned to the right on going out of the main door of the building, which was in the proper direction for his car at the corner of School Street. But in spite of this, an old acquaintance of Mr. Boerum's is quite positive that he saw him walking hurriedly across the Common, within a few moments of the time at which he was known to have left the office. His continued absence from home and business created no special alarm until about noon of the following day. Mr. Boerum is reported to have been in good health, with genial family relations, and his partner has stated that there could be no cause for business worry, as the firm had made more money in the past year than in any two previous ones of their history.

February 16. I have just concluded an exhaustive investigation of my father's business affairs, and I am rather surprised to note that in the past ten years he has lost considerable sums by stock speculation; but as these losses are much more than offset by his profits in other operations, I should have passed it over but for this fact, which, after all, may be nothing more than a mere coincidence. These items, charged against Stock Speculation, Profit and Loss account, though all consisting individually of uneven amounts in both dollars and cents, add up to exactly one hundred thousand dollars, even money. The checks for these items were all made payable to bearer, and are, therefore, without any endorsement, and inquiry at the bank elicits the fact that they were all cashed personally by my father.

February 24. Am utterly unable to find a stock broker who has ever handled an account for my father.

March 4. After a careful personal cross-examination, I must confess that I seem heretofore to have been actuated by a spirit of morbid curiosity rather than by a hearty desire to unveil some hidden mystery. But while I am willing to acknowledge that this apparent loss by stock speculation of exactly one hundred thousand dollars in ten years is hardly likely to have any bearing upon my father's disappearance, the fact of the personally cashed checks and the absence of explanatory details seem to warrant

me in seeking some further clue to the transactions. With this object in view, I am carefully going over every book, document, or memorandum of his in my possession.

March 6. In spite of all my close research, the only suspicious item that I have found is a name, written in an address book of my father's, which comprised both business and social connections. Upon one page — sandwiched in between a number of other names — were the two words, "Valjean Narpoli."

Contrary to my father's usual custom, no address was given, and no indication as to the business attributes of the individual (if such a cognomen really belongs to an individual). But there were two points noticeable about this strange name. The first is the manner in which it is written. Instead of the usual carefully rounded and shaded letters of my father's familiar chirography, these, while retaining his individuality, are shaky and somewhat indistinct. They look as if the writer had been laboring under some strong nervous excitement. Moreover, it is the only item so written in all the mass of matter at my disposal. The second point is an important one, as I believe. Before setting it down here I shall take pains to verify it more thoroughly.

March 8. Owing to the nature of the other names upon the same page, I am absolutely certain that the words "Valjean Narpoli" were written between ten and eleven years ago. The relation between this name, the apparent loss by stock speculation of exactly one hundred thousand dollars in ten years, and my father's mysterious disappearance, — this is the question to be solved. I shall follow up these few clues tenaciously.

Jan. 3, 1890. It is now a full year since I began this record. That I have not been able to add a word to it for over nine months is not from any lack of effort on my part. I have subscribed for the leading newspapers of the world, and I scan their columns closely for any details of my hobby, and, of course, have noted several additional cases since that of Mr. Boerum. But as they contain no distinctive features, I have not thought them of sufficient import to be entered. I have inserted advertisements in many newspapers asking for information in regard to Valjean Narpoli. The wording was carefully guarded and framed as if by one who had valuable information to impart, and they were signed,

of course, with a disguised name and address. Up to date, however, I have received no replies.

February 3. In very desperation at my ill success, I am going to note a French disappearance which has been printed in this morning's papers. M. Henri D'Affleur, member of the Chamber of Deputies for the department of the Loire, well known on the Bourse as a successful speculator in South American mining stocks, who has resided at 142 Rue St. Denis, Paris, for the last thirty years, has unaccountably disappeared. He leaves his residence for a short walk in the Bois, and fails to return. No one remembers seeing him after he left the house, and the police are absolutely without any plausible clue. Health, finances, social relations, and future prospects are entirely unquestionable. There are no special features to distinguish his case from any other, but the remarkable sameness of details in all these disappearances is so peculiar as to be positively suspicious.

February 19. Have received a copy of the current issue of the *Révue*, containing a special article called forth by the recent disappearance of M. D'Affleur. If I had needed anything to corroborate my incipient suspicions, I have it here at last in the person of one who is following out a similar theory.

The writer claims an intimate personal friendship with the missing man, and shows a keen insight into the workings of social economics. After a minute account of D'Affleur's temperament, attainments, and ambitions, he proceeds to argue against the possibility of his having committed suicide. He then branches off upon the general subject of mysterious disappearances, and I here write down a condensation of some of his most pertinent thoughts.

"In a journalistic experience of close upon a quarter of a century," the writer remarks, "it has fallen to my lot to chronicle the mysterious disappearance of many members of the upper class of society. Whether such a condition of affairs obtains among the lower classes it is extremely difficult to determine, owing to the less important position they occupy in the public estimation, but from my own experience I am inclined to the belief that it is comparatively rare.

"In regard to the former, I am able to state that in 1882 — the first year of which I have memoranda — there were five such

disappearances in Paris alone. While the number has varied from year to year, the tendency has been towards steady increase, and in the past year (1889) it reached the surprising total of fourteen. It would be interesting if the statistics on this subject, for France, as well as for the rest of the civilized world, were obtainable.

“Leaving statistics and crude theories behind, and dismissing the idea of suicide, let us return to original causes and seek for some plausible motive for voluntary absence. Taking the special class of victims concerned for seven years back, I find that the average age is sixty-two. They are, without exception, men of means as well as of social or political importance, with good vitality, and in nearly every case their harmonious family affairs were beyond the shadow of suspicion.

“With the three things that are possible of human attainment: —

{ Health
Wealth (in money as well as in fame)
Happiness

they were abundantly provided. My theory of a motive, therefore, would be something as follows: —

“From the cradle to the grave man expends his daily energy in seeking out new work for his muscles, new fields for his eyes, or new sounds for his ears. The individual methods may be far removed from one another, but the motive is the same. It can be unequivocally stated that the average man is never contented in the full meaning of the word. Even unlimited success will pall, and the multi-millionaire, the victorious general, and the world-renowned scientist, become victims of ennui at the very height of success. There are times in every man's life when he asks himself the use of it all. Why strive for apples that are found to be sour and worm-eaten? Why toil and labor when graves and even good deeds are so soon forgotten? Oh, to escape this incessant expenditure of time and thought upon problems connected merely with the animal wants of our human existence!

“Imagine the strength of such feelings in the class of which we are treating. Everything has been attained, and for them, unlike the humble artisan or prospering trader, there is absolutely

no future to look forward to. Philanthropy, patronage, the spreading of favorite doctrines or theories only put off the inevitable time when, unless death comes quickly, such a man will surely relapse into a driveling dotard. The biographies, diaries, personal memoirs, and public actions of the world's great men are the best proofs of this sad truth.

“Granted, therefore, that we have a possible cause or motive for disappearance, what is the nature of the novelty in living so to be attained? That is the knotted skein, the unknown quantity that we cannot even conjecture.

“By the careful reasoner, however, it will be at once admitted that no return to a lower condition of life would content a man who had once mounted the ladder. On the other hand, the view from its topmost rung — even if again attainable — would be no novelty. The new existence must be on an entirely different plane and in entirely different circumstances. We must, however, instinctively acknowledge the presence of confederates in such a well-executed plan of disappearance, whatever the result of such plans. This would mean to our human minds a lavish expenditure of money. What is obtained by the disappearance in return for this outlay is something that only time and thorough investigation can reveal.”

Feb. 19, 1893. Three years have gone by since I last wrote in this book! Three years that seem like three months, and then again like three centuries. In this time I have gained, enjoyed, and lost a wife and child! It seems incredible that such unselfish love and devotion can be without fruit in a hereafter. During these years I have forgotten my hobby. To-day, however, hardly knowing what I did, I picked up a newspaper, and almost the first paragraph that met my eyes was the following: —

“Ten days have now elapsed since John C. Graham, banker, of Exchange Place Building, New York City, left his office, and so far not the slightest clue as to his fate has been obtained. He started from his place of business at half past three in the afternoon, with the announced intention of dropping into the Union League Club before going to his home. The cabman who drove him uptown avers that when he reached the club, and opened the door of his vehicle, he found the man had vanished. Mr. Graham

has been a member of the Stock Exchange for over twenty-five years, and has been a power in the world of finance during the best part of that time. The last person who is known to have talked with Mr. Graham is a foreign-looking individual whose whereabouts at the present time are unknown. He was closeted with the banker just before the latter left his office. The attendant is positive that his reception by Mr. Graham was extremely cordial, and that the latter addressed him as Mr. *NARPOLI!*"

As I write, my hand trembles like the hunter's when he spies his long-sought quarry. At last, thank God! I have found something confirmatory of my suspicions. No power on earth can convince me that this Narpoli is not the Valjean Narpoli whose name I found in such suspicious connection with my revered father's transactions.

March 28. The skilled detective who wishes to secure a criminal often finds it expedient to disguise his identity for a time, and associate with that section of society most likely to have furnished the law-breaker. The reason of this lies in the tendency of mankind towards herding in classes whose interests are more or less in common. From titled aristocrats down to sneak thieves and "second-story" men they all tend to form coteries or friendly circles in keeping with their various grades. In the present case, the suspected class consists of men of wealth and high social standing. They are the class whence the mysterious disappearances are drawn. Why should the methods of the detective not succeed if applied in this direction? If I should disguise myself as a man of, say, sixty years of age, replete with honors, satiated with wealth, and openly complaining of life's unsatisfactoriness; if I should seek the society of other men so constituted and so thinking, is it not reasonable to suppose that an opportunity for disappearance may be held out to me also?

May 4. Have been to Europe and back again since the last entry. I left as a youngish-looking, blond-complexioned American. I have returned a mature, gray-haired, dark-skinned foreigner, — presumably French. The art of disguise has never been lost in Paris.

May 12. Have located in this city, where my personality is

utterly unknown. Have rented an elegantly furnished mansion, and have already received some considerable attentions.

May 13. A morning newspaper contains the following item: —

“We hear on very good authority that the latest distinguished addition to society is a member of one of the leading families of Europe, and that he has become nauseated with the subtleties and petty intrigues of court life.”

Have been elected a member of an extremely conservative club, that numbers among its members a large proportion of those whom I now denominate “suspicious characters.”

May 20. It is now generally understood that I belong to some aristocratic French family, and that for various political reasons I have been educated and brought up in England. I am spreading my small fortune with a lavish hand.

June 16. Have carefully canvassed the whole list of my acquaintances, and in confidential conversations have taken pains to express my utter disgust with the world and its vagaries. I may be mistaken, but a certain railroad president appears to take a special interest in me.

June 29. At last — I have met the man I seek! He came to the club with the railroad president, and was introduced to me as M. Valjean Narpoli. Though consumed by an inward fever, I managed to appear listless and uninterested, and was but scantily cordial in my greetings.

June 30. In spite of my theory, I could not help being agitated when Narpoli made evident efforts to ingratiate himself with me this evening. Without attracting his attention, I have made careful note of his personality. He is an under-sized, sallow-complexioned, foreign-looking individual; dresses well, but with an air of haste; linen spotless, but tie not properly adjusted; hands and feet small and well shaped, and the former, especially, almost feminine. His forehead is high, nose and ears unobtrusive, and chin and back of head well balanced. His hair and moustache are scanty and almost white, and his eyes are — indescribable, for the reason that their aspect is ever changing.

In our few hours' conversation I have in turn set him down as a lunatic, a philanthropist, a criminal, a man of peaceful instincts, a human bloodhound, a lover of humanity, and various other an-

tagonistic mentalities ; simply and solely from the change in the expression of his eyes.

The man is a perfect prodigy ; I have tried him in every conceivable direction, and can find no limits to his attainments. Languages, archæology, philosophy, astronomy, and all the rest of the learned sciences seem like a well-read book to him. And I find him expressing his ideas with the air of one who knows much more than he says, but conceives you hardly capable of understanding it.

Sometimes he seems almost Mephistophelean, and I grow cold at heart when I think of my father. Again I feel as if I should be perfectly willing to trust my own life in his hands.

July 2. Valjean Narpoli is now under my own roof, as an invited guest ! It would be possible for me to enter his chamber, and force a confession at the pistol's mouth. But has he something to confess, or are my suspicions but the offspring of an unduly excited brain ? And again, is such a one as I conceive him to be likely to confess, even at death's door ? My only chance is to wait — wait — wait !

July 3. After a late dinner we passed many hours in delightful conversation. Our talk drifted through all the mazes of dogmatism, theosophy, and evolution. Several times he seemed to regard me with a peculiar, questioning look ; and I shall be extremely surprised if he does not make some disclosures to-morrow — or rather, as the sun is already showing, to-night.

What the outcome will be I know not. From a vindictive suspicion of a possible conspiracy, my ideas and feelings have become so mixed and chaotic as to be impossible of logical expression.

July 4. This evening as we sat at ease in my library, Narpoli suddenly drew himself up in his chair, and waving his hands excitedly, spoke as follows :—

“ You doubtless consider yourself conversant with the principal inventions and discoveries that have marked the advance of civilization in this nineteenth century ? The subtle force called electricity, that is captured, controlled, and utilized, and yet whose component parts and extreme powers are utterly unknown ; the effect of sound waves as recorded upon a revolving waxen cylinder, which perpetuates our songs and voices, while the primal

cause of such sounds remains undiscoverable; the steam locomotive, with — but there is no need to go down the whole line. A single illustration would serve to show the puny nature of our knowledge of all.

“A man of your age and experience knows how utterly unsatisfactory are the so-called exact sciences to an intelligent mind. But, disappointing as they are, they seem to be all we can get; and the few short years that remain to you and me will doubtless see but a scant advance beyond the present knowledge line. It is sad to think of dying without even a dim perception of the many truths around us. But enough of science; I'm going to tell you a fairy tale.

“Once on a time — before the wolf nursed Romulus — before the writing appeared on the wall of the king's palace at Babylon, — aye, and even before the chisel's edge had shaped the sphinx-stone — there lived certain men who devoted their lives to the attainment of knowledge. It may astonish you to hear that, even in that distant day, these wise men knew considerably more than the average savant of the present century. One reason for this lay in the comparative newness of the world, and the lack of countless antagonistic theories. These wise men were only human, however, and although they lived longer than the average of mankind, by reason of their peaceful, studious habits, still their day of reckoning came at last — as it must come to each one of us. But they had thought of and prepared for this contingency beforehand; and their stores of learning were passed on to favored disciples.

“This is certainly a pretty idea, is it not? If it were only true. Imagine the possibilities of such long-continued investigations, supposing that this study had been kept up continuously even to the present day. With your keen perception you can readily see that such a class of men must be thousands of years in advance of our own time, in their knowledge of all things.

“Would it not be a priceless boon, after one has exhausted the possibilities of ordinary civilization, to pass the few remaining years of life amidst such knowledge? To have the common mysteries of life swept aside like spray from one's forehead, and to be able to tread close upon even eternity itself!

“No, not a word more now. Is it really a fable? You shall know everything to-morrow. Good night.”

The whole mystery of the disappearance of such men as my father lies perfectly plain before me. The French journalist's “unknown quantity” is known. Valjean Narpoli has promised, and to-morrow I shall record herein the final —

Here the paper was torn off in a jagged, uneven line, leaving the sentence incomplete.

Such is the exact wording of the writing upon the pieces of paper that formed the tail of the curious kite that my black retriever dog brought to my feet on the morning of the sixteenth day of November, 1895, as was related in full in the preface to this narrative.

While the story is extremely coherent, it will be noted that there is a marked absence of any names and places that could be used in identifying the writer. He is an American, however, and the principal action evidently takes place in some important city of our land. The references to one named Valjean Narpoli seem to be the only tangible clue, and his personal appearance is minutely described.

Where the kite came from, and why such a book was mutilated for the purpose of completing it, is immaterial until this promoter of disappearances among the wearied rich is discovered. My motive in making the facts public is to ascertain whether the stupendous conclusion to be drawn from them is entitled to credence, or if it is merely the offspring of some deluded brain.

Can any one answer the question?





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Melted Melody.*

BY JAMES J. McEVILLY.



WHEREVER the famous band leader and composer, M. Zouzan, appears with his orchestra, he is preceded, like royalty, by an advance courier. Consequently, when the world-known orchestra was billed for one night at a certain town in the Great Lake region, the manager arrived early in the morning, arranging that M. Zouzan with his half hundred men should follow in the afternoon.

He had barely completed his preliminary business, and gone up to his room, when a black-faced butler brought in a card, and mumbled, confidentially, that "the-gen'l'man-was-in-a-mighty-big-hurry."

Before M. Zouzan's manager had read the name on the card, a man stepped briskly into the room, closed the door with a quick, backward movement, and spoke abruptly.

"You are M. Zouzan's manager?"

"I am."

"You play to-night at the Grand Opera House?"

*This story received a fifth prize, of \$100, in THE BLACK CAT prize competition, which closed March 31, 1897.

"Yes."

"The concert will close about eleven?"

"Near that."

"I wish to engage the full band for the rest of the night. What will be the amount of the bill?"

M. Zouzan's manager stared. "Beg pardon?" he queried; and when the singular request was repeated, began to shake his head dubiously. He was not a hasty man, however, and he took second thought, and a second look at the other before speaking the point-blank refusal that was on his lips.

The man was tall, firmly built, and perhaps fifty-five or sixty. His flowing hair was white, and his face smooth-shaven, save for a thin, blanched mustache. Though brimming with nervous energy he stooped slightly, and his gray penetrating eyes peered through gold-bowed spectacles in a searching, questioning way. He was well dressed and had the appearance of a man of affairs.

The manager's tone altered. "Your desire, you will permit me to say, is not exactly of the usual sort. Our services, and the price,—well, that would depend on what you wish us to do—where you would wish us to play, and to what audience."

"I want your musicians, under M. Zouzan's leading, to play for about half, or possibly three quarters, of an hour. There will be no audience. The place is not in the city, but some distance outside. I will be at the opera house at the close of the concert. I will have carriages in waiting at the stage entrance. It will be a two hours' ride each way."

Then, as though noting the dubious look again stealing over the face of the manager, he went on hurriedly: "The service desired may be unusual—I dare say you are right—but I am ready to pay you well. The time chosen best serves the essential condition of secrecy, for there must be a promise on the part of yourself, and of M. Zouzan and his men, to reveal nothing whatever of the affair until I make it public. Certain other requirements will be made known to you all before we start. I guarantee your entire satisfaction with my arrangements, and I guarantee the safe return of the entire party by six o'clock to-morrow morning. Now what is your price?"

Again the manager hesitated, repeated his remark about the

unusualness of the proposition, and ended by postponing his decision until the arrival of M. Zouzan at five that afternoon.

To this arrangement the other consented, though with the testiness of one accustomed to dominate, remarking as he went out that the band he did engage would be likely to add an interesting leaf to its laurels as well as money to its pockets.

As the door closed, M. Zouzan's manager tilted his chair, pushed back his coat, slid his thumbs into the armholes of his vest, and whistled a long crescendo whistle, with indrawn breath. He had just turned to the consideration of how big a bill the man would stand, when the door opened and M. Zouzan entered, — to be greeted by a hurried recital of the proposition just submitted to his manager.

"But who was it? — what's the man's name?" the bandmaster asked, as the other finished his story.

"Confound it if I know. Wait! The boy did bring a card, I believe, but the man got in ahead of time, and then so astonished me that I forgot it. Here it is now."

This was the card: —

PROF. JOHN HENRY PIERCE.

AMERICAN MUSEUM.

"Oh, Professor Pierce!" exclaimed M. Zouzan. "Very well. Tell him we'll go, and don't charge him over five hundred, either."

"There, there!" to the other's stammering demur; "he's all right. He may do queer things — he has, often — but whatever he proposes, it's all right."

"Who is he, anyway?"

"Oh, a big scientist — one of the great guns of the Museum. Did some curious things in chemistry, then took up ethnology, and went rummaging about in caves, prying into the secrets of

prehistoric man. Expects to find the skeleton of the Missing Link, for all I know. After ransacking and digging into the deposits in the great caves, Mammoth, Luray, and the others, and crawling through all the little ones, he went down and sweltered in the caves of Yucatan; and, the last I heard, it was feared he was lost off in the Jenolan caverns in Australia."

"Interesting man!" remarked the manager.

"Yes, and when he first took to spectacles his friends in Washington used to tell him, jokingly, that it all came of living underground, and that presently he would have nothing left but rudimentary eyes, like the blind fish in Mammoth Cave. All the same the professor can see a mighty sight more than most men, even now.

"As to his latest scheme," — with a finality of accent that silenced the objection on the manager's lips, — "you may be sure that we shall come out of it O. K., and the result will probably be some surprising addition to the world's stock of knowledge. Now," he added, "I'm going over to the opera house. When Professor Pierce returns tell him that the whole concern shall be at his service at the close of the concert. And be sure you agree to anything that he proposes."

So it was that when the professor walked in on the stroke of five he found the way made smooth before him. The manager followed M. Zouzan's directions in every particular — save one. In writing the bill for advance payment he added fifty per cent. to the amount M. Zouzan had named as outside limit, and chuckled to himself when, without blinking, the professor drew his check for the amount and hurried away.

The hangers-on at the opera house were puzzled. There was an air of mystery about the place that piqued their curiosity. The last number on the programme, and a final encore, had been rendered; the last burst of applause had died away in the rustle and bustle and chatter of the departing audience; the musicians had come out of the hall and crossed the passage into the main dressing-room; an unusual time had elapsed, yet not one had reappeared.

Outside, the drivers of a few "night liners" were gathered in a group at the hack stand on the square discussing the meaning

of the row of great closed six-horse omnibuses drawn up before the stage entrance. The drivers of the omnibuses sat on the boxes as mute as statues.

The stream of humanity which had poured out of the pillared portico of the opera house had flowed away into the night; the blaze of lights had been quenched; the square had sunk into its midnight repose of dimness and silence.

As the musicians entered the main dressing-room at the close of the concert they each in succession noted M. Zouzan and his manager standing by a table at one side, and then each in succession started at sight of a most unusual figure beside them—a man with flowing white hair, wearing a dark robe that fell to his feet, and rolled away from the neck into a hooded cape that lay over the shoulders and ended in a point half down the back.

M. Zouzan almost immediately turned to his men. "I have not often had occasion to test your co-operative spirit," he remarked quietly, "but I do so now with confidence—even when I announce that I have made an engagement for the National Symphony Orchestra to go some distance out of the city and give another performance between now and morning. I need hardly say that I shall make due return for this extra service."

"And you will permit me," said the curiously robed stranger, before the first surprise could pass into possible objection, "to add to M. Zouzan's business statement a few particulars. First, I wish to assure you of your personal comfort and safety. Before leaving here I shall serve you substantial refreshments, and you will be returned to your hotel in season for, at least, a cat-nap before breakfast. I am aware that this night expedition and performance, following the concert just ended, make a large demand upon you, and in appreciation of that fact, with M. Zouzan's sanction, I now hand his manager an additional check for two hundred dollars, to be divided among you on our return." The stranger here handed a check to the manager.

"And now, gentlemen," he resumed, "I have two favors to ask. First, that you will humor the—well, the whim of an old man—an eccentric old man, if you like,—and each wear over his dress-suit a robe, such as I have on myself."

Then, while some of the older men began to look askance, and

most of the younger to show an eager interest and to pass about the hint of a masquerade, he took a step forward, deftly lifted the peaked hood, drew it over his head, and dropped down before his face a curtain-like visor with breathing-hole and disks of colored glass set before the eyes.

"I must ask," went on the disguised figure before them, "that no man lift his visor after leaving this room until our return to the hotel. Also, as this is a secret expedition, I must ask the individual promise of each man to reveal nothing of the affair until I make it public. M. Zouzan and his manager go under the same conditions."

The old man touched a bell. Folding doors at one side slid back, disclosing a table spread with substantials, and waiters in attendance.

As the men came back into the main dressing-room, talking and laughing in high good humor, they found the long table piled with the masquerading robes — and as each received his garment he gave his promise of secrecy.

The manager then led the monk-like procession through the lobby, down the stairs, and out to the waiting omnibuses.

M. Zouzan and his manager were to ride with Professor Pierce in his private carriage, which stood at the rear end of the line. As the professor held open the door, M. Zouzan stepped in, and then drew back with a surprised exclamation. He had found himself face to face with a feminine figure, cloaked and veiled, sitting silent and moveless on the back seat!

Professor Pierce laughed lightly. "A friend," he said simply. "You shall have an introduction later, if you need one."

Then began the long ride: first, the rapid jolting over cobbled city streets; after that, with the scattering of lights, the yielding gravel of country roads. There was no moon, and through the colored glasses they felt only a vague kaleidoscopic obscurity, flashed through at times by the light of lamps burned late in village homes or outlying farms, by lovers loth to part, or, mayhap, by lonely souls holding vigil by the dead.

Now and then came hills up which the horses toiled, only to gallop down the decline, and then settle into a swift even pace across the level. Gradually the levels shortened in, and the hills

rose up higher and steeper ; the road roughened, until they seemed to be riding over untracked ground ; in the momentary pauses the panting of the horses was half lost in the souging of the wind through the trees ; then the panting pauses alternated with jerky pulls up precipitous steeps, the wheels grinding over ledges and sinking into silences of fallen leaves — until, finally, the forward movement ceased altogether.

Word was now passed from one vehicle to another and the men, their vision obscured and their movements hindered by the clinging robes, descended cautiously to the ground, and stood waiting orders. Somewhere ahead a fitful light flared up, as of a torch carried in the windy darkness. The professor and his party passed along to the head of the line, but nobody noted the un-masculine form of one of the four. Then the right hand of each man was placed upon a guide-line, and he was told to move forward slowly, following the man ahead of him.

Presently the suppressed exhilaration of wonder and amazement yielded to a vague apprehension. The will-o'-the-wisp light ahead only emphasized the blacker darkness into which they had entered. There were no longer stars overhead. There was an uncanny chill in the air. A faint hollow reverberation repeated the footfalls of the procession. They were aware of bat-like wings.

Gradually it stole into the consciousness of one and another that they were descending into a cavern, and the thought went in whispers from man to man.

After a time the way no longer slanted downward, but stretched out in a smooth level, and progress was more rapid. Suddenly the reverberation seemed to come from a receding distance, as if they had reached an open space. Then sounded the command to halt and to lift visors.

M. Zouzan and his half hundred musicians, as their eyes were unveiled to their surroundings, felt as might enchanted men in an enchanted palace. They were grouped in a great rounded alcove, in the side of the vaulted passage along which they had come, and which stretched on beyond to the limit of vision.

Opposite, across the vaulted passage, opened another great alcove, curved and domed like the apse of a cathedral. As a

dozen torches were rapidly set in a semicircle around this space, the musicians gazed in wonder at the dazzling spectacle before them. Slender gleaming stalactites, as of alabaster, descended on all sides, often joining with upspringing stalagmites to form unbroken columns. Back, at the center, where might have stood the high altar, was a marble-white projecting ledge, down over which spread a shimmering flow as of water, though it disappointed the expectation in never falling from the edge. Beneath this singular sloping shelf, and extending out to the center of the alcove floor, a wide, limpid pool of water mirrored the glittering torch-illuminated scene. From the domed roof, and out across the passage, and over their heads, depended a myriad minor stalactites, translucent as icicles, each holding at its tip a trembling drop.

The professor stood for a moment motionless before the torch-lit grotto as before a shrine, and, indeed, such it was to him that night; then he turned to M. Zouzan. "Play!" he said.

And either as a result of the leader's sense of the fitness of things, or of the professor's stipulation, the band broke into the stately music of "Old Hundred," while each memory supplied the stately words: —

"Be Thou, O God, exalted high
And as Thy glory fills the sky —"

The Tannhäuser overture followed, and then one of M. Zouzan's own famous marches, fit for a nation's advancing feet.

The martial music died in splendid echoings down the endless passage, and a movement in the professor's party drew all eyes. As a butterfly emerges from its chrysalis, a silken-white woman emerged from her wrappings, and stepped out into the rosy light of the torches. Had a nymph risen from the pool, no greater would have been the surprise. The half hundred men leaned forward, looked, and then listened, while a marvelous voice sang Mertini's marvelous "Swan-Song of the Queen."

As the tragic tones of the heart-break had their last-echoed repetition, "La Diva Mariana!" shouted the musicians, and fairly went wild in applause.

The professor had assured M. Zouzan's manager that the band

would have no audience, but for those musicians La Diva Mariana, for it was indeed the world-famous prima-donna, was alone an audience, and in their monk-like garb, in that subterranean torch-lit hall, they rendered in a triumphant way for her Von Hommer's "Multitudinous Seas," with all its amazing range of Atlantic tumult and Pacific calm, its rippling runs up sandy beaches, its ground-swell cadences, and its flashing, thundering, tempestuous finale.

As La Diva Mariana rose like a white whirlwind, kissing her hand to the men in graceful acknowledgment, there befell a startling phenomenon.

Jarred, perhaps, by the tremendous musical vibration, the myriad drops that trembled at the stalactite tips overhead fell in a shower — a shower not of rain, but through some transformation in their transit, a shower of rattling, glittering hail, and the men picked the hailstones up in wonder, and watched them melt in their hands. They were half inclined to attribute this strange thing to the magic of the professor, for the manager had given them a hint as to his personality. But they had not long to meditate upon this wonder, for again La Diva Mariana stood before them. She lifted her hand for silence, and now she was singing "Home, Sweet Home," as only she can sing it. And as always when she sings it, men wept with the homeless Payne.

For such music, silence was the only possible applause. In the hush following, a sharp, cracking report turned every eye to the opposite alcove, as the altar-like projection plunged forward and fell with a gleaming splash into the pool below.*

Instantly, as the ripple-rings touched the edges of the basin, a delicate musical harmony pervaded all the air, sounding on and on in swelling tones, as if augmented by its own echoes until, rumbling down the vaulted passage in mellow melodic thunders, it receded far, far, and died away; then, suddenly, reflected by

* Ice caves, not caves in ice, as in glaciers, but earth and rock caves where ice is mysteriously formed in summer, are found at various points over the earth. One of the most famous, near Selitze, in the Carpathians, supplies the villagers with ice in midsummer. From its roof hang immense icicles, and drops falling to the sandy floor are instantly congealed. A similar cave exists in the peak of Teneriffe, ten thousand feet above the sea. In the Imperial Salt Mines at Ilatski, ice hangs in solid masses in the hottest weather, but melts during the rigors of the Russian winter. The most noted ice cave in the United States is at Decorah, Iowa, a description of which may be found in "White's Geological Report," Vol. I., p. 80.

some opposing wall of rock, the great melody came rolling back in redoubled volume.

"The voice of many waters!" cried La Diva Mariana, in a tone of awe.

Professor Pierce, who had sprung forward, and stood peering into the pool, now turned toward M. Zouzan and his musicians. His white hair was shaken into a halo about his head, his face glowed, and there was a ring of triumph in his voice.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you have my thanks. Your performance has been a great musical success. I believe it will also prove a great scientific achievement. You may now go, all of you."

Slowly the cowed procession, as the torches died down to dimness, followed the guide-line back to the omnibuses. And if, on waking from his "cat-nap before breakfast," one and another pinched himself, and still could not say if he waked or dreamed, it is little wonder.

Whenever Prof. John Henry Pierce appears in public a notable audience is present. At the last session of the International Science Association, the interest and expectancy were increased by his recent resurrection from the Jenolan caverns, and by the rumor that he was to make a new and startling revelation.

As the audience gathered, groups of gray conservatives mingling with young men fired with the enthusiasm of discovery, and with end-of-century visions of the undiscovered, the eyes of all turned to the stage with undisguised curiosity. Attendants were bringing in a tall gas stove with a large rectangular top. This was connected by flexible tubing with a gas-fixture. Then a huge cabinet was wheeled in, and its outer door swung back, revealing, through a thick plate glass, a frosty-white interior.

Pretty little pleasantries began to flit about the room. One was that the professor was about to make a visible exhibition of the hottest heat in juxtaposition with the coldest cold. One, of feminine origin, asserted that they would presently be invited to sample an absolutely scientific omelet. A third declared that they were about to witness an exposition of prehistoric cookery — favorite dishes in the Age of Tails,

The professor's first words arrested this lightness of mind. "I have once and again," he said, "been honored with a commission as Ambassador of Nature, if I may so put it, to bring before this association facts new to science. I am again so commissioned."

He paused, then resumed. "One of the great English scientists,—Faraday, was it not?—when about to witness a novel demonstration, asked to know for what he should watch. Giving you likewise a clue, I will say that you are not to look, but to listen."

Professor Pierce now motioned to his attendants, and, while one lighted the gas stove, he himself unlocked the cabinet and directed the other to remove a large porcelain pan, on which stood, edgewise, a whitish slab, and place it upon the top of the stove.

"The porcelain pan," stated the professor, "holds a slab of ice, white and translucent from air imprisoned in rapid freezing—slowly frozen water, as you know, yielding, instead, transparent ice. But there is more than air imprisoned in this ice! As it melts a marvel will be manifest. Listen!"

Professor Pierce slowly raised his right hand, and, as if in response to the movement, the music of "Old Hundred" took its stately way out of silence into the hearing of the people—the full rich music of an orchestral rendering, yet no orchestra was in the hall. There was, indeed, a faint quality of remoteness in the music, as if it played behind a screen or curtain—yet no one thought of a hidden band—the audience knew Professor Pierce, and that knowledge guaranteed the genuineness of the marvel.

Checking the movement to applaud at the end of the hymn, the professor stood with uplifted hand, a quiet smile on his face, while every one listened in wonder to the Tannhäuser overture, and then to the most famous of the Zouzan marches. At that the applause started, with cries of "Zouzan! Zouzan! Wonderful!" But the professor stepped forward with both hands lifted, warning to silence, while Mertini's "Swan Song" floated through the air.

Then it was that the audience sprang to its feet and cheered. "La Diva Mariana!" Men cried, "Bravo!" And in the first lull a voice called out, "Do it again, professor!"

"There can be no encore at this concert," remarked the professor, with a light laugh. "The music, which was frozen into ice, has escaped in the melting, and I have no power to recapture it. More music, however, is imprisoned in the unmelted section of the ice, and that you shall hear presently."

When the tempestuous finale of Von Hommer's "Multitudinous Seas" had dissolved into the air, Professor Pierce motioning his attendants to return the remaining ice to the cabinet, said: "Before resuming the concert, I will give you briefly the history of my discovery, the mystery of which I have as yet but partially penetrated."

"Some time after my return from the hill caves of Yucatan, and before my departure for Australia, in the course of my ethnologic researches, I opened what proved to be the grave-mound of a medicine-man, or priest, of a now extinct people. Among the relics lay a flat tablet covered with hieroglyphic writing." Then, in a narrative bristling with technicalities, the professor related how the tablet, translated during his absence by the experts in the museum, proved the key to the location of a sacred cavern wherein, before a shrine or altar, the priest performed sacred rites. At this altar, so the tablet read, in midsummer flowing water was miraculously changed to white rock. This white rock (presumably ice) took within itself the chants of the priest, and on being borne to outlying parts delivered the sacred music to other tribes, — and in so doing itself vanished. To the speaker, with his extensive knowledge of caves and cave dwellers, it had proved an easy matter to discover this holy of holies, and to verify the statement concerning the properties of the "white rock." Nor was it any wonder that to a primitive people, discovering the cave by accident, the formation of ice in midsummer had seemed supernatural, its vocal qualities worshipful, and that the spot sought by them as a shelter had soon been converted into a shrine whose vocal ice was made to serve priestly purposes. For the experiments of the scientist had confirmed the record of prehistoric man. Through repeated tests he had discovered that in that immemorial cavern, by some marvelous but still unexplained acoustic and chemical combination, every vibration of sound was conveyed to the waterfall, frozen into the constantly forming slab of ice as

sounds are recorded on the cylinder of a phonograph, and there imprisoned until released by the melting of the ice.

"My final test, whose results you know," the professor said in finishing, "was performed by taking to the cavern M. Zouzan's band and a famous prima-donna. By another year I expect not only to melt melody but to congeal it in your presence, and who knows but that at the banquet following the meeting your ices may melt in your mouth to the melody of enchanting music?"

Even while he spoke the attendants had been making ready the last slab, and now, amid a hush such as might precede a benediction, there gushed from the melting ice, like water from the rock touched by Aaron's rod, the liquid notes of La Diva Mariana's voice in the music of "Home, Sweet Home."



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A Celestial Crime.*

BY CHARLES STUART PRATT.



NOT since Professor Webster of Harvard murdered his friend, Dr. Parkman, and cremated the body in the laboratory furnace, has any crime within college bounds approached that tragedy in sensational features — with one exception.

The extraordinary events I am about to relate make that exception. At the very start, however, I would like to say that the account of this later college tragedy includes no such revolting details as make a nightmare of even the memory of the Webster-Parkman case. This later tragedy, instead, involves a beautiful element of romance, while at the same time it surpasses the earlier in strangeness, especially in the startling solution of the mystery — a denouement quite without precedent, I believe, in the annals of crime.

On the evening of the 14th of November, President Everett of Banvard College — for obvious reasons the names of persons and places are slightly veiled — gave a reception, which closely connected events rendered the most famous in the history of the old university town.

This reception was in honor of a young Norwegian explorer, who had a short time before made the pioneer crossing of Greenland on skees. With him, however, this narrative is not concerned,

* This story received the first prize of \$1,000 in THE BLACK CAT prize competition, which closed March 31, 1897.

but rather with three of the college professors. These professors, in accepting the president's invitation, expressed their admiration of the lion of the evening, and their pleasure at the prospect of meeting him — yet each in his heart knew he was going, not to meet the explorer, but to meet the president's daughter.

The three professors were all comparatively young men. Prof. Henry Thurston had that fall been appointed to the chair of English Literature. In the popular mind he had won his spurs, in the pages of the *Free Lance* and the *North Continent*, in three or four headlong tilts against the new realism, and he had just published a novel which sustained his leadership of the romantic school in America — all of which would indicate the man of imagination and fervid temperament.

Prof. Gordon Browne, after sailing close to the wind of dogma through his divinity course, and then plunging into the Toynbee Hall work in London, and later into the college settlement beginnings at home, was now occupying the newly established chair of Applied Christianity. Professor Browne and Professor Thurston were cousins, and the two had been given their education and start in life by a wealthy uncle, a man of rigid views and notable piety. It is perhaps needless to name in this connection the nephew that stood nearest the old man's heart.

The third of the three professors, Spencer Whitney, was the son of the now aged theological war-horse of the university, from whom he had inherited an introspective mind and a New England conscience. He was the assistant astronomer, and had attracted some attention in scientific circles by certain discoveries in what might be called microscopic astronomy, and by two monographs on meteoric dust and the cosmic origin of aerolites.

Neither of the three professors had married; but, having successfully passed the preparatory stage of life, and reached assured positions, it is not surprising that they had come to the conclusion of the male sex in general, that it is not good for man to be alone; still less is it surprising that on the night of the 14th of November, the daughter of their college president should have been a greater attraction than an Arctic adventurer. Miss Everett most certainly merited their admiration.

The president's reception was a distinct success. The climax of interest for those present (and for two in particular) was

reached when the handsome blond Norwegian, clad in furs, skated into the great parlors on the identical pair of skees which had borne him across the snowfields and glaciers of Greenland. The sudden focusing of attention on this picturesque figure made the opportunity for one of the three professors to ask, and for Miss Everett, to answer, a somewhat momentous question. Save for this *sub-rosa* incident, to which we shall refer later, the details of the evening are of no more concern to us than the lion of the evening himself. The real drama begins at the reception's end.

It was nearing midnight, and most of the guests had departed, when Professor Thurston and his cousin stepped out into the sharp November night. They at once entered into talk so earnest, so excited, that, as they passed out of the old colonial gate, and started down South Avenue toward Banvard Square, a policeman standing in the shadow of an elm pricked up his ears.

"But, cousin," one of them was saying, "listen to me, for heaven's sake, listen to me — you must do it!"

"Never," said the other, with suppressed vehemence, "never! And if ever you —"

A sudden gust of wind whirled away the rest of the sentence, and before the next lull the two had passed beyond the policeman's hearing. "Look out," he muttered, "breakers ahead!"

Barely had he settled back once more, when a third person came out of the gate, glanced down the avenue toward the other two, then strode off in the same direction. At the instant of turning, the street light fell on his face, and the policeman noted its pallor and strained expression, then idly wondered if, after all, it was not the ghastly effect of the electric glare — yet he was sure he heard the man cry out, half under breath, "Too late — lost!"

The grounds of Banvard College, a long triangle of grassy lawns, shrubbery, and great elms that have been generations in growing their spreading pendulous branches, lie between South and North Avenues. These avenues converge to the west, and finally meet in the paved space of Banvard Square. Numerous paths wind across from avenue to avenue, one or another touching in its course all the older college buildings. Some of the more recent, such as the gymnasium and the observatory, have straggled off into the region on the other side of North Avenue. A little way out from the southwest corner of Banvard Square stand the

great buildings of the college press, and beyond lie the marshy meadows through which flow the tidal waters of the James.

Not far from the end of the college grounds, where the last of the winding walks widens midway into a circle bordered by rhododendrons, stands the statue of Banvard, the college founder. As the cousins reached the entrance to this last path they halted for a minute or two, still talking in the same vehement manner; then, with an impatient gesture, Professor Thurston whirled on his heel, and Professor Browne turned into the gravel walk, and quickly disappeared among the shrubbery.

At this moment Professor Whitney, a few rods in the rear, his quick eye noting the actions of his fellow-professors, also turned off the avenue, and struck into a path which, running at a diverging angle from the other, led in the direction of the observatory.

Professor Thurston, after a dozen steps on toward the Square, stopped abruptly, whirled about, quickly retraced his steps, hesitated, and then started swiftly along the path his cousin had taken.

Almost immediately he reappeared, stepped hesitatingly out upon the sidewalk, dashed off, stopped, then wheeled back again to the entrance. With slight variations these movements were thrice repeated, in a manner indicating great excitement and still greater indecision. Finally, with a nervous toss of the head, and the firm step of resolve, he walked swiftly to the Square, and along the diagonal flagging to the southwest exit.

Professor Thurston had not observed, at the moment of leaving the college grounds, a police officer who, coming almost simultaneously around the corner from the side street opposite, had stood and watched his zigzag movements, and then taken the same direction along the opposite sidewalk.

Presently the professor came to the little square in front of the college press. Off to the right ran the old residential street where he boarded. He had set one foot on the flagged walk to cross over to this street, when he stopped rigid in his tracks, clapped his right hand to his hip pocket, and exclaimed, "My God!" in a tone low but distinctly audible in the midnight stillness.

Professor Thurston did not cross the street, just then. For a full minute he stood, one foot on the flagging, one on the sidewalk, his right hand at his hip pocket, his left pushing his hat back from his forehead, as if in perplexity or profound thought.

He then walked rapidly along the side of the little square, and at the corner of the block turned and quickened his pace along a deserted cross street.

Once he half halted and glanced back over his shoulder, as one does on hearing stealthy steps following in the night, but no human being was in sight on the street behind him.

Turning upon a wider thoroughfare, he soon passed the ragged edge of the town, and felt in his nostrils the pungent scent of the marshes, and in his eye the gleam of moonlight upon flowing water. The road was walled up five or six feet above the meadows, and ran straight across them, and on a dead level, save where it rose and bridged the river, a quarter mile out from the town.

Once a dull thud, as of one jumping from a height, caused the professor to glance back a second time. Had he been more disturbed, or even curious enough to cross the street and look down over the railing, he might have caught a glimpse of a vague form, which presently followed in the shadow of the wall, and momentarily peered over the top toward the object of its pursuit.

But Professor Thurston did not cross the street, nor did he again look back over his shoulder. On the bridge he stopped, thrust his right hand into his hip pocket, drew forth a small object, and tossed it over the railing. There was a falling gleam as of polished metal, a splash, and silence.

And in the silence there rolled out over the meadows the mellow boom of the midnight bells. The sound and the scene called up the famous bridge-song of another college professor, who was a poet, and who also once "stood on the bridge at midnight, as the clocks were striking the hour." In a rich vibrant voice the professor chanted :

"How often, O how often,
I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide !

"For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,

And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

"But now it has fallen from me,
It is buried in the sea ;

And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me."

Professor Thurston walked back into town with a swift unhesitating step. At his own door he slipped the latch-key into the narrow slot with a hand nervous, perhaps, but unfumbling. As he turned up the light and drew the shades, and then for a

long time paced the room in a state of high excitement, he little thought that, every time his shadow crossed the plain area of the curtain, two keen eyes over the way noted the pose of that phantom professor, the character of its movement, and drew conclusions therefrom. Such was the fact. When, at last, the light went out, Sergeant Pike, the police officer who had at first followed Professor Thurston from curiosity, and later with his detective instinct roused, walked to the nearest street-lamp and looked at his watch. It was twenty-three minutes of four.

The next morning Professor Thurston was late at breakfast. Mrs. Dorothy Richards, the elderly lady who made a home for the young man, was the widow of a college official. For many years she had lightened her loneliness and buttressed her toppling fortunes by boarding a succession of widower and bachelor professors. She was a motherly soul, and had shared the depressions of the older and the elations of the younger. To Henry Thurston she was like some kind old aunt, humoring his whims, and with assumed authority demanding his secrets.

On this particular morning, as she took up the silver tongs and selected the exact measure of sugar which suited the professor's taste in coffee, and poured the yellow cream over the sparkling cubes, she gave a dubious little nod that set a-quiver the violet ribbons of her morning-cap. Then through her gold-bowed glasses she sent a teasing glance across the table, and remarked:

"You came in late, last night, Professor—I was awake myself, at the time, and afterwards—and I hoped the excitement that kept you walking your room for hours was of a happy nature!"

"Quite so, my dear Mrs. Richards—indeed, it was an absolutely blissful excitement. I'd like to tell you the secret, but, really, I don't dare speak it aloud as yet—I might whisper it, though," he added, and stepped around the table and whispered in her ear. "Do you wonder now that I walked the floor?" he asked, as he resumed his seat and faced her across the table, a dancing light in his eyes and a manly red in his cheeks.

"Not a whit," replied Mrs. Richards, lifting the coffee-pot and pouring the rich brown liquid over the cream and sugar, while a heightened color followed the smile over her delicate old face. "I was sure I detected the buoyancy of good fortune in your step, and could hardly wait till morning to congratulate you."

"I thank you," said the professor, taking his cup of coffee.

"And what is more," went on Mrs. Richards, shaking her plump forefinger at the professor, "I believe I can guess —"

Just what Mrs. Richards guessed will never be known — she did not finish the sentence. At that instant the shrill cry of a newsboy penetrated the windows like the screech of a steam whistle.

"*Globe* extra! Terrible crime! Professor Browne murdered by the Banvard statue on the college green! Full — account —"

Professor Thurston's coffee-cup fell with a crash, and the red receded from his face.

"Your cousin!" cried Mrs. Richards, horror in her voice.

She had started up to call the newsboy, when the bell rang sharply. As she hurried into the hall and opened the door, an officer pushed by and into the room.

"Professor Thurston, I believe?" inquired the man.

The professor was apparently too overcome to speak. He bowed his head in answer.

"It is then my unhappy duty," said the officer, with a triumphant air that rather belied his words, "to arrest you for the murder of Professor Browne."

"Stop!" cried Mrs. Richards, facing the officer, a flame of indignation in her face. "Why, the two men are cousins, and have lived like brothers!"

"Precisely. Cain and Abel were brothers," remarked the officer drily.

"You brute!" was all Mrs. Richards could find voice to say — and so saying she sank into a chair, and burst into helpless tears.

Professor Thurston stood like one dazed. "Poor Gordon, poor Gordon!" he repeated over and over. "Only last night I left him at the college grounds."

"Yes," interjected the officer, "and he was found just where you left him, on the college grounds, by the Banvard statue."

The professor took no notice. "Poor Gordon!" he repeated — "and to think I had hot words with him, the very last night!"

"Look here!" exclaimed the officer, laying his hand roughly on the professor's arm, "you're not obliged to incriminate yourself further — and there is no time — you must come with me."

At this Professor Thurston roused himself. "I am ready to go," he said simply. And then, stepping to Mrs. Richards, he

took her hand. "Good friend," he said, "cheer up! It's but a dreadful blunder — all will come out right. Good-by."

She could not reply, and the sound of sobbing followed the two men out of the door.

The lip-to-lip telegraphy which carries the news of disaster or crime through a crowded town is well-nigh miraculous. At 6.45 A. M. a janitor crossing the college grounds had discovered, by the Banvard statue, the body of the murdered professor. By 7.30 the news had reached the outskirts in every direction. Careful statistics gathered by the *Globe* reporters, and tabulated by the Banvard professor of mathematics, demonstrated that the average speed of the news was one mile in eleven minutes.

Close on the heels of this first sensation sped the no less startling news of the arrest of the murderer, and the murderer's surprising identity — then both burst the town barriers and flashed with electric swiftness over the country, and under the sea to London and the university centers of the continent.

Before the first shock had subsided, the press set its reporters at work, and kept the public at the fever point by its discoveries and theories. One enterprising reporter ingeniously disguised himself as the college chaplain, and gained entrance to the prisoner's cell. Professor Thurston instantly penetrated the deception, but before the man was ejected he made certain observations of such vital moment that they were published under scare-heads, and specially despatched by the Amalgamated Press — to wit, the disconcerting color of the murderer's hair and eyes, a peculiar and sinister twist of his moustache, and the precise number of gold fillings in his incisor teeth.

A week later, a great morning journal, whose chief purpose in existing was to anti-climax its evening contemporaries, published full details of a daring burglary at the home of Mrs. Dorothy Richards, of the capture of the burglar in Professor Thurston's writing room, and the finding in his possession of an important piece of evidence which had escaped the search of the detectives. This was a paper in Professor Thurston's handwriting, apparently the plot of a romantic novel, in which the hero acquired fortune by murdering the man who stood in the way of his heirship. The connection between this plot on paper and the murder of Prof. Gordon Browne was obvious, as will presently appear.

The notes for the novel undoubtedly led to the rumor, published with full details, that Professor Thurston in his solitary cell was writing an autobiographic romance, embodying the secretest secrets of his recent crime ; and that this book was being set up on three new linotype machines, and would be published simultaneously in English, French and German on the day of his execution.

The achievements of the press reached a climax, shortly before the trial, in the astounding discovery, announced with profoundest regrets and with profoundest sympathy for the distinguished family, that Miss Everett, the beautiful daughter of the president of Banvard College, was in some as yet unrevealed way implicated in the murder of Gordon Browne. The very vagueness of this report opened the way to the wildest conjectures.

On the opening day of the trial, the extraordinary circumstances of the case, and the character and position of those concerned, crowded the court-room. College dignitaries, ladies of social rank, eminent lawyers, packed every available space. Hundreds fairly fought for entrance. Could seats have been had for money, they would have gone at a higher premium than the favorite chairs at the Symphony concerts.

The counsel for the prosecution, after alluding to the peculiar wickedness of what might very properly be called a fratricidal crime, said, with an air of deep conviction, that while no eye had witnessed the murder of Prof. Gordon Browne, the motives for that murder were so evident, and the chain of circumstantial evidence so clear, and unbroken, and convincing, that the calling of witnesses became little more than a legal formality preceding the verdict of guilty. He would therefore briefly demonstrate, with the exactness of a problem in Euclid, that Prof. Henry Thurston, moved by the two chief motives to murder, cupidity and jealousy, had, on the night of the 14th of November, at twenty-five minutes to twelve, by the Banvard statue on the college grounds, murdered his fellow-professor, his cousin, his almost brother, by one terrible blow from the butt of a pocket revolver — a cowardly blow, struck from behind.

The prosecution first proceeded to prove its theory of the avarice motive to the murder, touching lightly Professor Thurston's personal finances, and depending principally on the will of the prisoner's uncle, lately deceased, by which, without so much

as a dollar's allowance to the prisoner, his vast fortune was conveyed entire to the prisoner's cousin, Professor Browne. The prisoner was shown to be the next heir-at-law.

Following this, with much expressed regret at the necessity of dragging the name of so honored a lady into the case, evidence was submitted to show the intense rivalry of the two cousins for the hand of Miss Everett.

Then, starting with President Everett's reception, the events of that night were passed before the lime-light of legal scrutiny. The policeman stationed that night before the president's home related how the two professors left the gate in hot dispute, and testified to the threat he had half overheard.

The murdered professor's watch had been crushed in his fall. It had stopped at twenty-five minutes to twelve.

The chief witness for the prosecution, Sergeant Pike, came on the stand with the same air of being master of the situation which he had worn on the morning of the arrest. He had turned on to South Avenue, opposite the path leading by the Banvard statue, at twenty-three or four minutes to twelve—one or two minutes after the murdered man's watch had stopped—and at that instant had observed the prisoner emerge from the aforementioned path under most violent excitement.

Sergeant Pike described in detail the rousing of his curiosity, which gradually changed to suspicion, and then to conviction, as he had followed the professor in his night walks. He made much of the incoherent raving of the prisoner while on the bridge, after he had thrown some glittering object over the rail—his ear had caught some of the crazy sentences, about being carried off by the ebb tide, and something he couldn't bear, and a rigmarole about burying something in the sea. His description of the shadow pantomime on the curtain was damaging evidence.

Mrs. Richards was obliged to corroborate the floor walking, as well as the admission of "hot words" at the time of the arrest, though she endeavored to give both a favorable interpretation.

Sergeant Pike then related how at daybreak he had again visited the bridge, and, the tide being down, had discovered what he believed to be the glittering object the prisoner had thrown over the rail—a nickel-mounted pocket revolver. Although tossed well out from the upper side of the bridge, the combined current

of the river and the ebbing tide had borne it back again as it sank, until it had lodged among the rocks at the base of the pier.

A hardware clerk identified this revolver as one he had sold to Professor Thurston somewhere between the tenth and fourteenth of November, about the twelfth, he should say.

Medical experts testified that death had followed almost instantaneously on the crashing in of the victim's skull. With a plaster cast they made clear, by the position and direction of the depression, that the blow must have fallen from above and behind.

The butt of the pistol fitted this depression.

Closing this final evidence, the famous expert, holding out the death-mask in his left hand, raised the revolver by the barrel in his right, and said solemnly :

"For one instant, on that fatal night of the 14th of November, this revolver was raised above the innocent head from which was made this mask — for one instant — then descended the terrific blow which crushed the skull, and crushed out the life, of Gordon Browne."

As he spoke these words, he brought the revolver down on the fragile death-mask with a crash that sent its fragments flying over the court-room and into the faces of judge and jury.

This dramatic demonstration of the murder was pictured in all the evening papers, and carried conviction to their readers. Had the public been the jury that night, they would have given the verdict of guilty without leaving their seats.

The following day — it was now the second week of the trial — Professor Thurston went on the stand. He appeared serious, but neither agitated nor depressed. Indeed, this had been the manner of the man through the trial, and it had called out much comment, a few holding it to be the air of innocence, most, however, regarding it as brazen audacity. The reporters had dilated on the man's colossal coolness and iron nerve. One keen-eyed reporter had gone so far as to assert that at the awful moment when the revolver had shattered the death-mask, and men turned pale and women screamed, he had seen a smile on the face of the prisoner.

Professor Thurston's defense consisted chiefly in a new interpretation of the events of the fatal night, rather than a denial of the events themselves. He admitted the dispute with Professor Browne. His cousin had come to him previous to the reception,

and proposed to divide equally with him the fortune left by their uncle. He had refused to accept the gift—money which his uncle had deliberately decided to withhold from him. On leaving the president's house at the close of the reception, Professor Browne had again pressed the matter, and he had impatiently threatened that if ever his cousin mentioned it again he would cut his acquaintance. Nevertheless, his cousin had continued his arguments and persuasions as they walked down South Avenue.

At the entrance to the path leading past the Banvard statue, Professor Browne had struck across the grounds toward his home. They had parted with some hot words on his part, words which a moment later he had regretted, and with the purpose of recalling them he had turned back and started to overtake his cousin. After a minute, not coming in sight of Professor Browne, he had returned to the avenue, and had then very likely acted with the indecision noted by Sergeant Pike.

Reaching the neighborhood of the college press, he had suddenly thought of the revolver in his pocket, and moved by a sudden impulse he had walked out to the bridge and thrown it into the river. The crazy rigmarole he was credited with was simply a few verses of a poem by one Longfellow, a college professor.

On request, Professor Thurston recited these verses, with such effect that the manager of a leading lecture bureau, who chanced to be present, made this memorandum :

“ If he escapes hanging, offer him \$500 a night for fifty public readings.”

Professor Thurston stated that he had walked his room till the hour reported, under the excitement of a great happiness which had lately befallen him. He declined to define that happiness. He also declined to account for buying and then throwing away the revolver. He did not refer to the motive of jealousy.

The first witness on the following morning was Miss Everett. Her appearance created a sensation. Ladies lifted their lorgnettes, and leveled their opera glasses, and stared. Men whistled under breath. Miss Everett wore no symbol of solemnity. She stood in the murky court-room like an Aurora — attired in a marvelous arrangement of brownish moss-green, slashed and enlivened by coppery pink, and heightened to æsthetic splendor by a corsage decoration of Mermet roses.

"I have insisted," she said, with clear directness, "on making a statement in behalf of the prisoner which his sense of honor has prevented his making for himself. On the evening of the 14th of November, at my father's reception, I promised to become the wife of Prof. Henry Thurston. I believe this disposes of the motive of jealousy." In a flash she added, "Would I had the power to disprove all other charges, which are equally false."

Then she turned toward the prisoner with a radiant smile—and the look that flashed between them quickened the heartbeats of the women, and made every man present wish himself for the instant in the place of the prisoner. One man, whose eyes never left the face of the witness, would gladly have taken that place had he known the next step would have been to the gallows.

Later on in the trial, Professor Thurston, being again on the witness stand, said that he felt in duty bound, now that Miss Everett's statement had loosed the seal of silence, to make an explanation in regard to the unaccounted-for revolver. He had, he said, previous to the reception, been intensely jealous of his now dead cousin, and of one other among Miss Everett's admirers. Hope had alternated with wild despair; and during a period of depression he had bought the revolver, determined to end his life should he be rejected. He could not now say, he added, whether he should have carried out that purpose, but it was his deliberate intention at the time. Along by the college press he had suddenly thought of the revolver, then useless, and on the impulse of the moment had hurried out to the bridge over the James and thrown it into the river. It was under the elation of his happiness that afterward he had walked his room till twenty-three minutes of four.

The trial neared its end. The chief evidence for the defense, touching the events of the night of the murder, on which the verdict really hung, lay in the unsupported statements of the prisoner. Over against this stood the more tangible evidence for the prosecution, the whole array of compromising circumstances, with the crushed skull, the revolver fitting the depression, and the prisoner, the acknowledged owner of that revolver, emerging from the path one minute after the stopping of the dead man's watch.

Miss Everett's words and presence had, indeed, made a favora-

ble impression. The attorney for the prosecution, however, tarnished the brightness of this impression by dragging it through the dust as a cunning trick to win the sympathy of the jury and dazzle them with her beauty. In his summing up he ignored the jealousy motive, but added the engagement to his argument on the avarice side. He ridiculed the suicide afterthought. He made the most of the evidence of the medical experts.

He would credit the prisoner, he said, with inventing a most ingenious story, which dovetailed into the actual facts, established by his witnesses, in a way quite worthy of a romantic novelist — but what was such a story worth? — was not the prisoner a man trained to the business of devising plots? — was not the romantic novelist, in short, a professional literary liar?

This closing sentence formed the topic of editorials in the next issue of all the literary journals in the country. In the pages of the *Free Lance* and the *North Continent* there were mighty tournaments, between the adherents of the romantic and realistic schools, over the problem of a novelist's veracity.

The judge had delivered his charge. The jury had been out some hours, and still had not reached an agreement. The foreman had asked once and again for instructions, which the judge had given, adding to the last the injunction that the minority must give due weight not only to the evidence but to the opinion of the majority — a point which, as I remember, called out much adverse comment in the legal reviews of the trial.

Slowly the clock ticked away the minutes of the silent waiting. The late afternoon light was waning — yet no one left the crowded court-room. The suspense was becoming unbearable, when, at last, the jury filed back, and the foreman announced the verdict:

“Guilty!”

Miss Everett was evidently unprepared for this. She turned to her father's face with a look of inquiry and amazed unbelief, but reading there the whole horrible truth, she turned toward the prisoner, and her very soul went out in the cry, “Henry!”

And back through the shuddering hush of the crowded court-room came the firm answer, “My love!”

For sixty awful seconds the court and the people sat dumb before this sacred expression and interchange of love. An agony of sympathy clutched at every throbbing heart.

A sudden movement, a low inarticulate cry, caused every one to bend toward the back of the room. A tall figure had risen in the gathering gloom. The man's dark not-old face seemed suddenly to have turned aged and ashen.

"Stop!" he commanded, in a voice that sounded far and sepulchral. "Stop! The verdict must be reversed! Henry Thurston is not guilty!" Those near saw the man stagger against the back of the chair in front of him. "I must speak," he added.

The judge broke the silence of astonishment that followed. "Professor Whitney," he said, "this is unprecedented procedure, but your father's name, and your own, entitle you to attention. Speak on."

"First, let me say that Professor Thurston has stated the exact truth as to his parting with his cousin. I was behind them as they walked down the avenue. I saw the parting, as I turned into another path to cross over to the observatory. I saw Professor Thurston start after his cousin, and almost immediately turn back to the avenue, hesitate, and then walk on toward the Square."

"But why in God's name, knowing this, have you been silent?" broke in the judge.

"Because I am a guilty man," came the answer in a voice shaken with emotion — "because, before the bar of my own conscience I stand condemned of intended murder, not of Gordon Browne, but of the man before me, of Henry Thurston. Confession must be part of my punishment. I loved the woman who is to be Henry Thurston's wife. When Gordon Browne was found dead, my heart leaped because one rival was removed; when Henry Thurston was arrested for his murder, my heart exulted that he, too, was to be taken from my path. Knowing his innocence, knowing shortly, too, the instrument of his cousin's death, I buried his deliverance in my heart, and waited for my time to come. Miss Everett's heroic avowal let loose within me a hideous doubt; it unleashed the scorpions of conscience—from that hour I have been in hell! The two cries that followed the verdict broke the last fetter of my damnable delusion, and I could speak."

In the ghastly half-light the man's face was terrible to look upon. Moved by a pitying purpose of turning the current of self-accusation, the judge asked, "But if Henry Thurston did not murder his cousin, who did?"

"No man — no man murdered Gordon Browne. It was a celestial crime — if crime there be."

A vague suspicion that they were listening to a man crazed by the tension of excitement and mental torture began to show itself in faces here and there. But, led outside of himself, the man now spoke with comparative calmness.

"I am, as you know, the assistant professor of astronomy. It was my purpose to spend the night after the reception at the observatory. The night of the 14th of November is of special interest to astronomers who are making meteoric studies, for on that night the earth, still passing through the great November swarm of meteors from the radiant of Taurus, also intersects in its orbit the distinct swarm from the radiant of Leo, known as Leonids.

"As I crossed the college grounds, with eyes half lifted, noting the direction of the faint lines of light now and then momentarily traced on the dark azure, I was conscious of a dazzling meteoric light half behind, to the left, and in turning had a glimpse of trailing fire which seemed to descend into the tree-tops. But such glimpses are so deceptive that I gave it no special thought, and went on to the observatory, where I spent the night.

"In the morning, when I heard of the murder and the crushed temple, in a flash I saw again the meteoric trail descending — it was, I now recalled, in the very direction of the Banvard statue — and I seemed to recall also a sound of impact, as if recorded by the sub-conscious act of memory. Could it be? — had that fiery meteoric stone struck down Professor Browne?

"When the crowds had dispersed, I went to the scene of the murder. As I was searching the ground near about, poking in under the rhododendrons, the old gardener, who was setting up among them a winter protection of evergreens, spoke to me. 'Be you the stone professor? — now, there's a queer one,' said he, pointing with his toe.

"I had no need to look further, and wrapping the rounded stone in my handkerchief I hurried home. When in my study I unfolded the aerolite, I started — not at the mass of blended stone and iron with its fused surface, but at something attached to it — a charred fragment of skin-like substance, with a few scorched hairs — in color the same as the hair of the dead professor.

"I knew I held in my hand the secret of the murder. That

tangible evidence of the truth of my words is now at the service of the defense. I predict that the meteoric stone will fit the crushed temple more exactly than the butt of the revolver. I predict that microscopic examination of the attached hairs will establish their identity with the hair on the head of the dead man. I believe it will show singed hair above the crushed temple."

With these words Prof. Spencer Whitney sank back into his seat. The death-like silence that ensued was broken by a woman's sob — and then a cheer went up that shook the walls with a great rejoicing.

The verdict was already reversed in the hearts and minds of court and people. I need hardly add that expert testimony established all Professor Whitney had said and predicted, and that the legal reversal of the verdict shortly followed.

Some time after Henry Thurston's marriage, the professor of English literature, and the assistant professor of astronomy, in the course of a long walk and a long talk which went to the healing of a lacerated soul, had come to the bridge over the James. The air was vibrant with the soft melodies of the night wind through the marsh grass, and fragrant with the aroma of the sea, and the light of the mellow moon lay over the tidal river. As on one night memorable to both men, the famous bridge-poem came to mind, and Professor Thurston chanted low these words:

" And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes ;

" The moon and its broken reflection,
And its shadows, shall appear
As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wavering image here."



For Story Tellers.

\$4,000 Cash!

1st Prize	.	.	.	.	.	.	\$1,500
2d	"	.	.	.	.	.	1,000
3d	"	.	.	.	.	.	500
4th	"	.	.	.	.	.	350
5th	"	.	.	.	.	.	250
6th	"	.	.	.	.	.	200
7th and 8th Prizes each \$100							200
							\$4,000

We will pay **\$4,000 in Cash Prizes** for original short stories for publication in

The Black Cat

WE WANT stories that are stories, stories that are wholly original and new in plot, incident, situation, and handling, stories so fascinating in every detail, and so interesting from beginning to end, as to appeal to intelligent people everywhere. **THE BLACK CAT** is cheap only in price, and its publishers desire and its readers expect the best stories that genius can devise and money can buy. We want clean, clever, wholesome stories, free from commonplace, padding, and foreign phrases, — natural stories, logically thought out, tersely told, and carefully polished. We want spirited short stories that tell, and tell finely in a few pages what nine out of ten long stories tell poorly in a dozen monthly instalments. The constituency for which these stories are intended are busy, brainy people, educators, doctors, bankers, merchants, and home makers, who look to quality and not to quantity, — who buy, read, and praise **THE BLACK CAT** because it presents in unique, original form the concentrated extract of the story teller's art, and who keenly appreciate the fact that it is solely the merit of a story and not the reputation of the writer that gains admittance to its columns. While writers may choose their own themes, we especially desire stories in the handling of which the morbid, unnatural, and unpleasant are avoided rather than emphasized. No dialect stories or poems will be considered.

CONDITIONS. 1. Each manuscript must bear at the top of the first page the writer's real name and address, in full, as also the number of words it contains, which may range from 1,800 to 6,000, but must in no case exceed the latter number.

2. Each manuscript must be legibly written, on paper not larger than 8 by 11 inches, must be sent unrolled, postage or express charges fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. Letters advising the submittal of stories must be enclosed with manuscripts, and not sent under separate cover. Manuscripts will be received and returned only at the writer's risk.

3. All stories will be judged purely on their own merits, and the name or reputation of a writer will carry absolutely no weight whatsoever. Every story will be judged not in accordance with its length, but with its worth as a story.

4. With every manuscript intended for this \$4,000 prize competition there must be enclosed, in one and the same envelope, one yearly subscription to **THE BLACK CAT**, from January, 1898, to January, 1899, together with 50 cents to pay therefor.

5. All envelopes containing manuscripts with subscriptions as above must be plainly marked, "For Competition," and addressed, "The Shortstory Publishing Company, 144 High St., Boston, Mass." Their receipt will be promptly acknowledged. Any competitor may send as many stories as he pleases, but in each case all the above conditions must be complied with.

6. The competition will close March 31, 1898, and within 60 days from that date the awards will be announced in **THE BLACK CAT**, and paid in cash. Should two stories be found of equal merit, the respective prizes will be either doubled or divided. In the case of stories unsuccessful in the competition but deemed desirable, the publishers will either award special prizes, of not less than \$100 in each instance, or will offer to purchase the same. All unsuccessful manuscripts will be returned, together with the printed announcement of the results of the competition. The conditions and requirements being here fully set forth, neither the publishers nor the editor can undertake to enter into correspondence relative thereto.

NOTE. As no manuscript in the case of which all the above conditions have not been complied with will be considered, it is urged that competitors make sure that their manuscripts are prepared strictly in accordance with the foregoing, are securely sealed in strong envelopes, with the necessary enclosures, and sent fully prepaid by mail or express.

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO., Boston, Mass.